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NINE

DISCOURSES

ON

BAPTISM.

VIZ.

WATER BAPTISM,
JOHN'S BAPTISM,
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,
BELIEVER'S BAPTISM,
INFANT BAPTISM,
BELIEVING PARENTS
AND THEIR CHILDREN IN COVENANT WITH GOD,
BEING BURIED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM
ILLUSTRATED.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

MRS. JACKSON'S CONFESSION.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY DAVID CARLISLE,

No. 5, COURT STREET.

1806.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, *to wit:*

BE it remembered, that on the twenty first day of June, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and six, in the thirtieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Daniel Oliver, Clerk, of the said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor in the words following, to wit: "Nine Discourses on Baptism, viz. Water Baptism, John's Baptism, Christian Baptism, Believer's Baptism, Infant Baptism, Believing Parents and their Children in Covenant with God, Being Buried with Christ in Baptism illustrated, to which is annexed Mrs. Jackson's confession"——Boston: Printed by David Carlisle, No. 5, Court Street, 1806.—In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an Act, entitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical, and other prints."

NATHAN GOODALE, { Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

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THE

UNIVERSALITY AND PERPETUITY

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TO

OBSERVE THE RITE OF

BAPTISM WITH WATER;

OR,

WATER BAPTISM A STANDING ORDINANCE

OF THE

G O S P E L.

SERMON.

ACTS, X. 47.

CAN ANY MAN FORBID WATER, THAT THESE SHOULD NOT BE BAPTIZED, WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST AS WELL AS WE?

THOUGH the religion of the goſpel is a pure and ſpiritual ſervice, not incumbered with ceremonies, yet being adapted to the nature of man, it does not wholly omit poſitive duties. It enjoins two ſimple, eaſy, and expreſſive rites, as ſigns and means of moral goodneſs and vital piety; viz. baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper. Baptiſm with water has been almoſt univerſally by chriſtians believed to have been appointed by the author of the diſpenſation as a ſtanding ordinance. The apoſtles evidently adminiſtered it to converts, Jewiſh and Gentile, in token of their admiſſion into the number of Chriſt's followers, and as a public acknowledgment of the admitted perſons, that they were his diſciples, and owned him for their Lord

and Maſter. There is reaſon to ſuppoſe, that this rite was uniformly obſerved by all profeſſors of chriſtianity, in the age immediately ſucceeding the apoſtles, and therefore had the ſanction of both apoſtolic inſtructions and practice. It is believed that the early hiſtory of the church does not point to a time when it was conſidered as a novelty, or when the propriety and neceſſity of the ordinance were called in queſtion.

The nature and deſign of this ſervice have been variouſly explained, and without doubt groſsly miſtaken and perverted in ſubſequent periods. In our times, not only the mode and ſubjects, but even the obligation and uſe of the ordinance, have become matters of diſpute with ſome, who name the name of Chriſt. There are thoſe who contend againſt forms with a preciſe formality; and there are others who ſeem to think poſitive duties of no value, becauſe moral duties are ſuperior; and ſome have probably been led to diſparage rites altogether, from diſguſt at the abuſes attending them.

Different ſects in modern times have maintained that baptiſm with water was not commanded by Chriſt; and that though it was adminiſtered by the apoſtles and firſt miniſters of the church, yet they did not conſider it as a goſpel ordinance, but as a ceremony to be uſed or neglected according to their diſcretion. Hence they have inferred, that if baptiſm be lawful, yet it is not required. One ſect profeſs to account it a Jewiſh carnal ordinance, which is aboliſhed. Another talk of there being but one chriſtian baptiſm, that of the Holy Ghoſt and of fire, at the ſame time admitting that if any wiſh for water baptiſm, either by ſprinkling or im-

merſion, for themſelves or their infants, they may be gratified. In the following diſcourſe we ſhall attempt to ſhow that *baptiſm with water is a ſtanding ordinance of the goſpel.* All unbaptized perſons ſhould be baptized in teſtimony of their faith, engagements, and privileges as chriſtians. The queſtion of the right of children to this rite, and of the mode of adminiſtering it, is not now to be conſidered. The text has reſpect to a ſentiment of thoſe who decry the rite in queſtion, viz. that baptiſm by *the ſpirit* is all which is meant by baptiſm in the New Teſtament. From this paſſage it appears, that though the deſcent of the ſpirit, or ſpiritual baptiſm had preceded, yet the apoſtle Peter alleges this as a reaſon for baptizing with water afterwards.

1. The firſt claſs of argument in ſupport of the univerſal and perpetual obligation of this practice is derived from Chriſt's commiſſion to his apoſtles. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you. And lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

Here we ſay is the inſtitution of water baptiſm by Jeſus Chriſt; a general account of its meaning and deſign; and a ſtrong intimation of its perpetual obligation. Here our Lord expreſsly appoints that water ſhall in a ſolemn manner be applied to believers. The apoſtles are not only to teach or diſciple, but to baptize; and to baptize in the paſ-

* Matthew, xxviii. 19, 20.

ſage under conſideration, muſt mean to make an application of water. Though water is not expreſsly mentioned in the commiſſion, there is not the leaſt reaſon to doubt that it was intended. Words are always to be taken in their literal, proper, common, and obvious ſignification, unleſs they be otherwiſe explained, or unleſs ſome good reaſon appear for underſtanding them otherwiſe. Now it is certain that the literal, proper, common, and obvious ſignification of baptiſm is a wetting, bathing, or aſperſing with water. There is no neceſſity, there is no ground for affixing a different meaning to it in the paſſage before us. It would be contrary to all the approved rules of interpretation—it would confound the meaning of language, and render it uſeleſs to any purpoſe of inſtruction. Where baptiſm is uſed with relation to the deſcent of the Holy Spirit, it is uſed in a figurative ſenſe, and the Holy Spirit is expreſsly mentioned. That the apoſtles *muſt* have underſtood Chriſt in his commiſſion to intend water baptiſm, may be inferred from the received and general ſenſe of the word ; and from the circumſtance, that during the whole term of his perſonal miniſtry, they had practiſed baptiſm with water.* That they *did* underſtand him to intend this baptiſm is evident from their ſubſequent conduct ; for in purſuance of his commands, they proceeded to baptize all their converts. This commiſſion, therefore, contains an injunction of the Author and Finiſher of our faith, delivered to his firſt ambaſſadors, to apply water to the ſubject in admitting him into the number of chriſtians, and implies the obligation of thoſe who

*John, iii. 22. iv. 1, 2, 3.

heard the gospel, not only to believe it, but to testify their belief by submitting to this application. What is said thus far may be allowed, and yet the *perpetuity* of the rite be denied. To show that it was not to be a custom peculiar to the apostolic age, we may draw arguments from the character of Christ as a divine teacher of the world, from the nature and use of the act to be done, and from the very language of the commission to the apostles. Is there not ground for the following remarks? "Jesus Christ was sent of God to promulgate a divine dispensation of religion to mankind, to deliver doctrines of universal concern, to enjoin laws of universal obligation. All his injunctions must be understood to be universally binding, unless he himself see fit in some way to limit them, or somewhat in the nature of the things or circumstances of the injunction limits them. This general principle is true, not only of his moral precepts, but of other precepts, peculiar to himself and his religion. Thus, for instance, the directions and promises, which he delivered concerning offering prayers to God in the name of Christ, though addressed directly to his immediate followers, without any express mention made of his future disciples, yet have been understood by all christians as obligatory on themselves, and a sufficient foundation for their practice." Were nothing said by Christ, intimating that not only his immediate ambassadors, but all his ministers in all future times should administer baptism to believers; and that all believers in succeeding ages should ask and receive it, it would still be our duty to inquire whether any thing in the nature or circumstances of the injunction, con-

fined it to the perſons, to whom it was firſt delivered. Now the reaſons on which baptiſm is founded are common to all ages.

This ordinance was directed to be given and recieved in or into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt, and in the name of Jeſus Chriſt; i. e. in token and acknowledgment of our relation to them, and their relation to us; and particularly as a ſign that we look upon ourſelves as the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, obliged to hearken to his doctrine, to follow his inſtructions, and to obey his commandments; and that we deſire to have an intereſt in his mediation. The words of Chriſt's commiſſion to his apoſtles repreſent baptiſm as a ſolemn initiation into the chriſtian profeſſion; and all its engagements and privileges. Other paſſages teach that it typifies in a particular manner the neceſſity of moral purity and righteouſneſs. * "Chriſt gave himſelf for the church, *that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word.*" Theſe are moral uſes of the ceremony not confined to any age of the church. As all perſons of all times are intereſted to pay due regards to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and to exerciſe the faith, and truſt, to make the reſolutions and vows that belong to chriſtians, ſo are they alike intereſted in a rite which expreſſes theſe acts and diſpoſitions.—Hence becauſe the words of the commiſſion do not limit the duration of the obſervance of baptiſm; and there is nothing in its nature, or the circumſtances of the times to limit it, we have reaſon to think it intended to be perpetual.

* Rom. vi, 3, 4. 1 Peter, iii. 21. Epheſ. v. 26.

On the other hand, the words ſtrongly intimate that it ſhould be continued. They enjoin upon thoſe to whom they are addreſſed two acts, that of teaching or making diſciples, and that of baptizing. They contain an encouragement to theſe ſervices, which is the promiſe of the preſence of the Redeemer to the end of the world. The duration of the duties is to be ſuppoſed coeval with the duration of the promiſe. This conſtruction is confirmed by the very general terms of the direction in Mark, xvi. 15, 16. "And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned." We cannot think that baptiſm would be mentioned in ſuch a connection, as an act neceſſary to expreſs and accompany faith, unleſs it were important, and required to be obſerved by all believers.

2. The practice of baptiſm with water by the apoſtles, during the Lord's perſonal miniſtry, affords arguments in favour of the ordinance in queſtion, John, iii. 22. After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. iv. 1, 2, 3. When therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and baptized more diſciples than John; though Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but his diſciples, he left Judea and departed again into Galilee. Chriſt is ſaid to do what the apoſtles did, becauſe they acted by his direction. Had our Lord no deſign in this? It muſt probably have been intended to be introductory to chriſtian baptiſm.

3. Another proof is taken from John, iii. 5. compared with verſe 26 of the ſame chapter. "Jeſus anſwered, verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." As if he had ſaid to the Jewiſh ruler, "you muſt have new principles and a new character, and in token of your converſion be baptized with water, in order to become a regular member of my kingdom." In the ſame chapter, v. 26, it appears that they who received Jeſus as the Saviour were baptized.

4. The doctrine of this diſcourſe is confirmed by thoſe numerous paſſages which directly or impliedly ſpeak of baptiſm by water, as a ſtanding ordinance in the ſpiritual religion of Jeſus Chriſt, according to apoſtolic practice. Rom. vi. 4. *We are buried with him by baptiſm.* Ephe. iv. 5. *One baptiſm.* Col. ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptiſm.* Heb. vi. 2. *Doctrine of baptiſms.* 1 Pet. iii. 21. *Baptiſm doth now ſave us.* Acts, ii. 38. *Be baptized every one of you.* EVERY ONE OF YOU. 41ſt verſe. *They that gladly received his word were baptized.* viii. 12. *They were baptized both men and women.* NO DISTINCTION OF SEX AS IN CIRCUMCISION. 13th verſe, *Simon believed and was baptized.* 16th *verſe, Only they were baptized in the name of Jeſus.* 38th verſe, *Here is water, what doth hinder to be baptized?* 38th verſe, *And he baptized him,* ix. 8. *Saul received ſight, and aroſe and was baptized.* x. 47. *Can any forbid that theſe ſhould not be baptized?* 48th verſe. *Peter commanded them to be baptized.* COMMANDED. xvi. 15. *Lydia was baptized and her houſehold.* 33d verſe, *The Jailor was baptized, he and* ALL HIS

ſtraightway. xviii. 8. *Many of the Corinthians believed, and were baptized.* xix. 5. *And when they heard this, they were baptized.* xxii. 16. *Ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins.* Rom. vi. 8. *Were baptized into Jeſus.* 1 Cor. i. 16. *I baptized the houſehold of Stephanus.* x. ii. *And were all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud.* xv. 29. *Elſe what ſhall they do, that are baptized for the dead?* Gal. iii. 27. *As many as have been baptized.* Theſe are ſome of the principal places in the New-Teſtament, where *baptiſm* and *baptize* are uſed: and they all mean the ORDINANCE of water baptiſm, or allude to the uſe of it, as a *ſtanding ordinance.* Other paſſages, which do not aſſert, plainly allude to water baptiſm. Tit. iii. 15. "Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he ſaved us by the waſhing (or lover) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt." Rom. 6. 4. "We are buried with him by baptiſm." The apoſtle has this exhortation to chriſtians, "Having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water, let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering."

5. The apoſtles were unanimous in adminiſtering baptiſm as an appointment of their Lord and maſter after he had aſcended. They baptized all their converts without one exception, that we can find on ſacred record. Acts, ii. 38. ii. 1. They positively commanded their converts to receive the ordinance. Acts, x. 48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus." Is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe that all the apostles in all parts of the world, among Jews and Gentiles, in all

the churches which they gathered, would unitedly, without one ſcruple or one objector or objection, go into the practice of baptizing with water, if it was not an inſtitution of their Lord, deſigned to be perpetuated in his goſpel kingdom, to the end of the world.

The conſent of the church from the earlieſt period of chriſtianity, through fourteen centuries, in the belief of the right and duty of water baptiſm is a ſtrong proof in its favour. Had it been an innovation, we ſhould hear of ſome objection to it in the firſt age of chriſtianity; we ſhould be able to get ſome evidence how and when it was introduced. The following are the words of Juſtin Martyr, who lived in the age next after the apoſtles. "As many as are perſuaded and believe the things taught and ſaid by us to be true, and promiſe to live according to them, are waſhed with water in the name of the Father and Lord of all, and in the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, and in the name of the Holy Spirit."

It may be proper to conſider objections to particular parts, or the general concluſion of the foregoing arguments.

Some have appeared to think that we have no reaſon to conclude that water baptiſm is meant, where baptiſm is mentioned without an expreſs mention of water. The anſwer is, if we have reaſon to conclude that any inſtances alluded to are not the figurative baptiſm of the Holy Spirit, we have reaſon to conclude that water baptiſm is intended. For only theſe two kinds of baptiſm are noticed in the New Teſtament. But we have no reaſon to believe that baptiſm with the Holy

Spirit is intended, unleſs it be expreſsly ſo termed. Chriſt, not the apoſtles baptized with the Holy Spirit, and being baptized is alſo diſtinguiſhed from receiving the Holy Spirit.

It has been ſaid that though the apoſtles did baptize with water, this was not done in purſuance of Chriſt's commiſſion. Paul ſaid that Chriſt ſent him not to baptize, but to preach the goſpel, and he was thankful that he baptized ſo few. John's baptiſm, it is pretended, had not ceaſed, and when the apoſtles adminiſtered the rite, they either conſidered it as John's baptiſm, or did it in compliance with the prejudices and wiſhes of the people, who were attached to ſuch an ordinance. To theſe objections it is replied,

1. It is not correct to ſay the apoſtles did not profeſs in adminiſtering this rite, to do it by virtue of Chriſt's authority. If the contrary does not appear, it is our duty to preſume that they had ſuch authority; but their baptiſms were adminiſtered in the name of Jeſus Chriſt. One of the obvious and acknowledged ſenſes of the phraſe, acting *in the name of Chriſt*, is acting by his direction, as his meſſenger, according to the rules and ſpirit of his religion.

2. Paul is ſpeaking not of his miſſion generally as an apoſtle, but of his being ſent to Corinth. His ſaying that this was not to baptize but to preach the goſpel, is not to be taken abſolutely, but comparatively. Examples of ſuch phraſeology in the ſcriptures are frequent. See Jeremiah, vii. 22. Hoſea, vi. 6. Matth. ix. 13. John vi. 27. Preaching was his principal buſineſs, and he rejoiced that he had baptized no more, not becauſe he was not author-

ized, but becauſe in their divided ſtate, and their wicked and fooliſh conteſts about different teachers, this people might ſay he "baptized in his own name," as the head of a party.

3. As to John's baptiſm, Paul thought that thoſe, who had received it, ought yet to be baptized in the name of Chriſt. Acts, xix. The apoſtles adminiſtered no other baptiſm than that which Chriſt inſtituted.

4. To ſuppoſe that the apoſtles baptized without any warrant, in compliance with the prejudices and inclinations of the Jews, is to ſuppoſe ſomething againſt ſcripture and reaſon, for it appears continually in this hiſtory, that they did baptize *in the name of Jeſus Chriſt*, by his authority and warrant. Moreover, the moſt expreſs inſtances of water baptiſm, mentioned in ſcripture, were of Gentiles who had not been accuſtomed to the water baptiſms practiſed among the Jews, and had no previous biaſſes or partialities upon the ſubject. When the Jews were baptized on the day of Pentecoſt, it was not done in condeſcenſion to their deſires, but in conſequence of the exhortation of Peter. The ſame may be obſerved of the Gentiles, who were baptized at the houſe of Cornelius.

Other objections againſt the perpetuity of this rite are taken from our Lord's waſhing the diſciples' feet and directing them to do it to each other, from Paul's circumciſing Timothy, St. James directing that the ſick be anointed with oil—and the decrees of the firſt apoſtolic council at Jeruſalem.

In reſpect to the firſt circumſtance, it was an example not of a particular act to be performed, but of a ſpirit and temper to be exerciſed and diſplayed

by all. Could it be ſhown that waſhing one another's feet, of which Chriſt gave an example and command to his apoſtles, would be as uſeful in all ages and places as it was then in Judea, that it was underſtood in a ſtrict and literal ſenſe, and practiſed immediately and conſtantly by them and their ſucceſſors, and delivered to the church as a command, we might think ourſelves obliged to regard waſhing one another's feet as a ſtated duty of our religion.

Paul's circumciſing Timothy was dictated by a reaſon peculiar to the times. The ordinance of circumciſion was not then *declared* to be aboliſhed; and Timothy, *born of a Jew*, might well ſubmit to the rite, in order to aid his reception with the Jews. The *anointing the ſick* in the name of the Lord was an appointment for their *miraculous cure*. But the age of miracles has paſſed away. The *decree* of the famous apoſtolic council at Jeruſalem was adapted to the caſe and circumſtances of the Gentiles at the time, excepting one article of a moral nature.

Let us make an improvement of the doctrine here mentioned.

Our firſt duty is to direct our ſerious attention to the deſigns and uſes of this ordinance. It has been affirmed to be a vain and unprofitable obſervance. Did Jeſus Chriſt impoſe on his church a uſeleſs and abſurd rite? It is inſtructive and beneficial, as it teaches us our ſinfulneſs, our need of renewal—as it brings to our view the objects of our faith, love, fear, and hope; and as it implies our engagements and vows to "live the lives we live in the fleſh by the faith of the Son of God." Let us

learn to consider this appointment with respect and gratitude; for it teaches us by a striking sign some of the most important doctrines, truths, and duties of our religion.

2. Who are the proper subjects of this baptism, will be a matter of inquiry in another place. Generally it is to be received by all who confess that Jesus is the Christ; who avow belief in his religion, and give credible evidence of sincerity in their profession, that they are the real disciples of Christ. Such persons may enjoy the rite for themselves and their infant seed.

3. With regard to the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism. It is the application of water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, or in compliance with the command of Christ. This is essential to christian baptism, which being once performed is not to be repeated to satisfy the mistaken notions of baptized persons.*

* Some persons who have once received baptism have expressed a wish to receive it again and been urgent in their application. There is nothing in the nature of the ordinance or the terms in which it is prescribed, favourable to the opinion that baptism is ever to be repeated. It is a form of initiation into Christ's church, though vicious members are to be cast out of the church, there is no intimation given in the scriptures that when so admitted they are to be baptized again, 2 Cor. ii. 68. Baptism is an outward sign of being in covenant with God; a token of obligation on the persons who have received it to fulfil the conditions of this covenant and to obey the whole law of God, when it is once performed according to the prescribed rules all its outward effects take place, baptism is good and is not to be renewed.

"One of the ends of baptism, observes Dr. Burnet, is that we are all *baptized into one body, we are made members one*

4. Would we prove ourſelves the true diſciples of Chriſt, let us feel and teſtify an unſhaken attachment to all divine inſtitutions. We ſhould eſteem them. We ſhould love them. We ſhould conſtantly and diligently attend upon them. Ordinances are the helps to ſalvation, provided by a wiſe and gracious God. Their appointment diſplays his love and grace, his goodneſs and patience, his wiſdom and condeſcenſion. Let our eye be to God, to bleſs and ſanctify to us all the means of religion, which he has ordained.

of another, 1 Cor. xii. 13. We are admitted to the ſociety of chriſtians, and to all the rights and privileges of that body, which is the church. And in order to this, the outward action of baptiſm when *regularly* gone about is ſufficient; a ſecond end of baptiſm is internal and ſpiritual, it repreſents regeneration, Tit. iii. 5. our being dead to ſin, and buried with Chriſt and our being *riſen* and *quickened* with him and made *alive* to God, Rom. vi. Col. ii. It is a juſt and natural diſtinction to ſay that the outward effects of baptiſm follow it as outwardly performed; but that the inward effects of it follow upon the inward acts. This difference is to be obſerved between inward acts and outward actions, that when the outward action is rightly performed, the baptiſm muſt be conſidered good; and not to be renewed, but if any one has been wanting in the inward acts, thoſe may and muſt be afterwards renewed or exerted and the want made up by repentance and obedience."

It may be proper to ſubjoin the following remarks, "as to the *neceſſity* of baptiſm, ſome ſeem to have laid too great a ſtreſs upon it, as if it were abſolutely neceſſary in order to ſalvation, grounding their argument chiefly on John iii. 5. Mark xvi. 16. Nevertheleſs it will be readily allowed that for any to abſtain from baptiſm, when he knows or has ſufficient means to know that it is an inſtitution of Chriſt, and that it is the will of Chriſt that he ſhould ſubject himſelf to it, in ſuch an act of diſobedience to his authority, as is inconſiſtent with true faith."

Doddridge Lec. page 372, vol. 2.

5. It is the duty of all people to be qualified to enjoy the ordinance of baptiſm. All parents ſhould ſee that they loſe no time, to enjoy it for themſelves, if unbaptized, and for their children. What is required of you, dear friends, is to ſeek and know God; to deſire, to know, and do your chriſtian duty; and to honour your Maker and Redeemer in the appointed ways. Give yourſelves no reſt, till you have obtained reaſonable evidence that you are meet for goſpel ordinances. It is a mournful thought, that ſo many live in the total neglect of this edifying and holy ſacrament of baptiſm. Either they do not ſeek to know the will of God, or knowing, they diſregard it. Unbaptized children! Unbaptized parents! Unbaptized youth! Do not contemn or poſtpone a compliance with your chriſtian obligations. Behold now is the accepted time; now is the day of ſalvation. Today if ye will hear his voice; there may be no morrow for you; no more time—no more ſeaſons of grace.

6. From what hath been ſaid, let all who have enjoyed the ordinance of baptiſm, feel the ſacred bonds thereof, and ſeek divine grace to enable them to live up to their baptiſmal vows. Let parents who have come forward and had baptiſm for their Children, and have devoted them, therein, to God, to be his, and for him, bring them up in the ways of Religion—teach them to pray—and pray with, and for them in their houſes:—inſtruct and govern them for God—ſet a pious example before them—and teach them their baptiſmal dedication—the meaning and import of it, as above explained, and as a peculiar privilege binding them to be the Lord's.—And let ſuch parents, far-

ther examine their own hearts and ways, and see if they gave up their Children, in the baptismal dedication, in outward appearance only, or in sincerity and in truth, hoping and trusting in God's mercy and truth for them.—And let parents who never prepared themselves to bring their Children to God in baptism, when they look on their dear infant flock, feel a deep sense of their sin, in the neglect of their duty to them: and *so pity*, and *so love* them, as to come forward, and give them up to God in baptism.—and let unbaptized youth realize their duty, and never give themselves rest, till they have dedicated themselves to God, in his covenant and baptismal institution, to be his in life, his in death, and his for ever.

AMEN.

N. B. *The foregoing discourse is chiefly derived from two Sermons of* NATHAN PERKINS, *D. D. entitled, "Baptism by water not a piece of superstition; but appointed by Jesus Christ," and a Discourse on the Divine Institution of Water Baptism, by* MOSES HEMMENWAY, *D. D.*

THE

NATURE AND DESIGN

OF

JOHN'S BAPTISM,

ILLUSTRATED

IN TWO

SERMONS.

BY JOHN CRANE, *D. D.*

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NORTHBRIDGE.

SERMON I.

ACTS, XVIII. 25.

KNOWING ONLY THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

THIS was said of the eloquent Apollos, who was one of the greatest teachers in the school of John the Baptist. This mode of expression imports his imperfect acquaintance with the doctrines and institutions of the gospel. It places him back, in a time when less perfect notions of christianity prevailed. He needed more instruction, in order to be completely furnished for preaching the gospel. When, therefore, Aquila and Priscilla perceived his ignorance, "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Apollos then knew only the doctrine and baptism of John. Hence we conclude, that John's baptism belonged to a dispensation less perfect than the christian dispensation.

The principal inquiry is, what was the design of John's baptism? Are we to consider it a christian ordinance, or a Jewish rite? Shall we place it under the gospel, or the legal dispensation? In order to take a proper view of the subject, it must be observed, that the disciples of Christ, under his di-

rection, adminiſtered baptiſm. I now propoſe to conſider John's baptiſm, and the baptiſm uſed by the diſciples of our Lord.

It will firſt be made to appear, that John's baptiſm, and that of the diſciples under our Lord's direction, were deſigned to anſwer the ſame purpoſe. In doing this, let us pay particular attention to the character and preaching of John, and alſo to the preaching of the diſciples, who were ſent out to preach during our Lord's miniſtry. The character given of John, in the prophets, is that of a forerunner of Chriſt. It was foretold, that John ſhould be ſent to prepare the way of Chriſt. Iſaiah, xl. 3, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtraight in the deſert a high way for our God." When John came, the firſt words which he uttered, were, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The principal deſign of John's preaching was to give notice of the immediate approach of the Meſſiah; to inform the Jewiſh nation, that Chriſt was at hand, and to prepare the people to receive him. Such was the great Redeemer, and ſuch was his divine miſſion, that a forerunner was neceſſary to proclaim his immediate approach. This information was ſuitable to prepare the people to receive him. Luke, i. 76, 77, "And thou, child, (John) ſhalt be called the prophet of the higheſt: for thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of ſalvation unto his people by the remiſſion of their ſins."

John's preaching was chiefly deſigned to prepare the Jewiſh nation for the reception of Chriſt. The twelve and the ſeventy diſciples were ſent forth upon a ſimilar errand. The directions

which our Lord gave the twelve disciples are found in Matthew, x. 5, 6, 7, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The commission, which our Lord gave to the seventy disciples is found in Luke, x. 1—11, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come." And among other things, which he gave in charge to them, he directed them to say, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

The particular directions which our Lord gave to the seventy disciples clearly discover the principal design of their mission. They were sent, two and two, before the face of Christ, into every city and place which he intended to visit. They were required to go before the Saviour, and give notice of his coming, that all the people might be in readiness to receive him. This was the object contemplated in John's preaching. The same may be said of the preaching of the twelve disciples. Christ said to them, Matthew, x. 23, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." The language of Christ to his disciples, on this occasion, was this; when you preach in one city, and they begin to persecute you, do not stay to contend with them, but flee to another place; for your time is short to make me sufficiently known to the cities of Israel.

John, and the disciples of our Lord, were employed in giving information to the Jewish nation, that Christ was at hand, and would soon erect the Gospel kingdom. John proclaimed a Messiah about to come. The disciples of Christ proclaimed a Messiah already come, who would soon appear among the people. John published his message and ceased. At, or near the close of John's ministry, the disciples began their mission. The preaching of John and that of the disciples united in one design. The conclusion is, that as John and the disciples were sent out for like purposes, so John's baptism and that of the disciples were used for the same end.

Nothing, perhaps, exhibits more fully the important mission of our Lord than the preparations made for his reception. John was sent to give notice of his coming, and introduce him to his public ministry. The twelve and the seventy disciples were commissioned to go forth, two and two, and communicate the interesting tidings, that the Messiah had come, and would soon make his appearance, in the cities of Israel.

As, therefore, the preaching of John and that of the disciples united in design, it is highly probable, that John's baptism and that which the disciples used, in the time of our Lord's ministry, were designed to answer the same purpose, or rather were the same kind of baptism.

The principal inquiry yet remains; is John's baptism to be placed under the Christian, or Jewish dispensation? Before I proceed to examine this question, let me consider the instance of John's baptizing Christ. While John was baptizing the Jews, Jesus came to him and presented himself for

baptiſm. Matthew, iii. 13, 14, 15, "Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him: but John forbad him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me? And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, ſuffer it to be ſo now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Then he ſuffered him."

It ſeems that when Jeſus offered to be baptized by John, John would have modeſtly declined that honour, ſaying unto Jeſus, I have need rather to be baptized by you, than you to be baptized by me, that is, in other words, you are by much the greater perſon. I can baptize with water only; but you ſhall baptize your diſciples with the Holy Ghoſt. I have ſins to repent of, and be cleanſed from; whereas you are entirely without ſin, and conſequently you can have no need of the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins. For theſe and the like reaſons, the honour ſeems too high for me. Unto John Jeſus replied, "Suffer it to be ſo now." I did not come to deſire baptiſm of you without a divine direction. I acknowledge what you allege is, in general, true. I am your ſuperior, and am without ſin; but it is my Father's good pleaſure, that as Aaron, the high prieſt, was conſecrated by the prophet Moſes, ſo I ſhould, in this manner, and by you, as an extraordinary prophet, be introduced to my miniſtry as Meſſiah. Whatever I know to be the will of my Father, I am ready to perform; and ſo ought you to be ready to do alſo. For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs; that is, not to comply with every moral duty only, but every poſitive inſtitution alſo, or every appointment of God. Then John ſubmitted, and conſented to do what Jeſus deſired of him.

If it ſhould be objected, that the baptiſm of John was the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins, and that as Jeſus had never committed any ſin, he could have no occaſion for the baptiſm of repentance, nor for the remiſſion of ſins. Why then did Jeſus go and deſire the baptiſm of John? or why did he not acquieſce, when John would have declined baptizing him? In anſwer to this objection it might be replied, that the ſame divine inſtitution may, to perſons in different circumſtances, anſwer different ends and purpoſes. Here let it be carefully obſerved,

1. That the baptiſm of Chriſt by John was not deſigned to manifeſt his repentance. When John adminiſtered baptiſm to the Jews, their baptiſm ſignified repentance. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." Take away the idea of repentance, and you take away the principal, if not the only deſign of John's baptiſm, when the Jews were the ſubjects of it. But no repentance was intended to be manifeſted in the baptiſm of Chriſt by John. For Chriſt was not a ſinner. Hebrews, vii. 26, "Who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners,"—1 Peter, ii. 22, "Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

When Chriſt offered up his life a ſacrifice, he was without ſin. Hebrews ix. 14, "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God." Baptiſm then was not applied to Chriſt, for the ſame purpoſe for which it was applied to the people of Iſrael. In them it ſignified their repentance. In Chriſt it ſignified no repentance.

2. Neither did Chriſt receive baptiſm from John, as a token of his being waſhed from ſin. Baptiſm, under the goſpel diſpenſation, is expreſſive

of a man's being cleanſed from ſin. So it is underſtood in the words of Ananias to Paul, Acts, xx. 16, "Ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins." But it is certain, that Chriſt did not receive baptiſm for this purpoſe. He could not; for he had no ſin to waſh away. He, who was pure, could not be waſhed from ſin; nor was it poſſible that he ſhould receive a token of being waſhed from ſin. The baptiſm of Chriſt by John was uſed for a different purpoſe, than baptiſm was intended to expreſs, when either Jews under the legal, or believers under the goſpel diſpenſation were the ſubjects of it.

3. Neither did Chriſt ſubmit to be baptized by John, as an example to the Jewiſh nation, or believers among the Gentiles. Chriſt was a great and ſhining example to the Jewiſh nation, in all his actions which are imitable. He is an example to all believers, in all ages of the world, as far as his practice was deſigned for imitation. But in the inſtance of his ſubmitting to be baptized by John, he was not a pattern for the people of Iſrael to follow; nor is his baptiſm by John an example of imitation to believers under the goſpel. Had Chriſt deſigned that his baptiſm by John ſhould have been an example of imitation to the Jews, he would probably have ſubmitted to it at a much earlier period than he did. John had almoſt finiſhed his miniſtry, when our Lord was baptized. John had baptized almoſt all the people, who received his baptiſm at all, before Jeſus came to him to be baptized. Jeſus was among the laſt, who received baptiſm by John. Luke, iii. 21, "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to paſs, that Jeſus alſo being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened."

Chriſt did not deſign to lead the Jewiſh nation down the banks of Jordan, in imitation of his baptiſm; for he came to John too late, to ſuppoſe that he meant his baptiſm as an example to the Jews. The greater part of the people, who ſubmitted to John's baptiſm, had been baptized before Chriſt came to John.

Neither could Chriſt, in his baptiſm by John, mean to be followed by believers, in goſpel times. For his baptiſm did not import the ſame thing, nor was it uſed for the ſame purpoſe, for which baptiſm is uſed by chriſtians. If the mode of adminiſtration was the ſame in John's time, as it was afterwards, it was deſigned for different purpoſes in Chriſt, from what it was in chriſtians; and therefore it became virtually another, and a different rite.

No man can ſubmit to chriſtian baptiſm, in imitation of Chriſt's baptiſm by John, if regard be had to the things ſignified by Chriſt's baptiſm. For no inſtance of baptiſm among men, can in any caſe mean the ſame thing, which Chriſt's baptiſm meant. There being nothing ſignified in Chriſt's baptiſm, which is ſignified in chriſtian baptiſm. Therefore following Chriſt, in his baptiſm, is totally without foundation.

4. Chriſt's baptiſm by John was a conformity to ſome law, which had reſpect to that occaſion only. When Jeſus came to John, he ſaid to him, Suffer it to be ſo now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Fulfilling of righteouſneſs muſt have reſpect to ſome law already in exiſtence. And Chriſt, in ſubmitting to be baptized by John, fulfilled righteouſneſs, or conformed to ſome divine rule. But the righteouſneſs, which was per-

formed, in Chriſt's baptiſm by John, had reſpect to what paſſed between John and Chriſt at that time. It was confined to that occaſion. Whether this righteouſneſs is imitable by men will be determined, when it is conſidered what divine rule was brought into uſe in the baptiſm of Chriſt by John. Therefore,

5. Chriſt's baptiſm by John muſt be conſidered as his obedience to divine appointment, in reſpect to the inauguration of the prieſthood. To obey a poſitive, or inſtrumental precept, is fulfilling righteouſneſs, no leſs than obeying a moral command. It was the ſpecial command of God, that Aaron and his ſons ſhould be conſecrated to office, by waſhing with water, or baptiſm. Exodus, xxix. 4, "And Aaron and his ſons thou ſhalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and ſhalt waſh them with water." See alſo Exodus, xxx. 18, 19, 20, 21, concerning the mode of waſhing. The hands and the feet were to be waſhed with water. Moſes, an extraordinary prophet, by God's direction was deſignated to perform the inaugural ſervices at Aaron's conſecration. John, an extraordinary prophet, was by divine authority deſignated to introduce Jeſus to his miniſtry, by baptizing him. Jeſus had now arrived to that period of life, at which the prieſts, under the legal diſpenſation, might be conſecrated to the ſervice of the ſanctuary. It was the command of God, that no prieſt, under the law, ſhould enter on his public miniſtry till he was thirty years old. Numbers, iv. 23, "From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old ſhalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the ſervice, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." Jeſus was now quali-

fied for the prieſthood, in reſpect to his age. Luke, iii, 23, "And Jeſus himſelf began to be about thirty years of age." This was ſaid of him, at the time when he received baptiſm from John. And here ſeveral conſiderations deſerve attention upon this ſubject. I ſhall mention to you the reſemblance between Moſes and John; the transferring of the prieſthood; the viſible conſecration of Chriſt, and the frequent alluſions to the ancient inaugurations of prophets, prieſts, and kings.

1. There is a reſemblance between Moſes and John. Moſes and John were both of the ſame family, the tribe of Levi. Moſes, the greateſt prophet that then had ever ariſen, introduced Aaron to the prieſthood. John, as great as Moſes, introduced Chriſt to his public miniſtry. Moſes was not waſhed himſelf; but at the command of God he waſhed Aaron. So we have no account, that John was baptized; but he was ſent of God to baptize Chriſt. Moſes reſigned his office to Joſhua. So John reſigned to Chriſt. Moſes ſoon died, after he had given up his office to Joſhua. So John ſoon died, after he had baptized Chriſt, and introduced him to his public miniſtry. Moſes pointed out Chriſt. So did John. Moſes prepared the way for Aaron's introduction to office. So John prepared the way of Chriſt, and inveſted him with his office. Between Moſes and John there is a ſimilarity. Moſes was a ſpecial agent appointed of God to bring forward the legal eſtabliſhment. John was a ſpecial agent appointed of God to adminiſter baptiſm to Chriſt, at his introduction to his public miniſtry.

2. The prieſthood was regularly transferred from the order of Aaron to Chriſt, in his baptiſm.

No man, under the law, might take the office of prieſt, unleſs he was regularly called of God. And Chriſt did not take this office upon him without the command of God. Hebrews, v. 4, 5, 10, "And no man taketh this honour unto himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an high prieſt; but he that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. Called of God an high prieſt, after the order of Melchiſedec." A modern author has this obſervation upon the ſubject, "Chriſt did not uſurp the prieſthood, or take it upon himſelf at random, without rule and order."*

Chriſt aboliſhed in his death, the order of Aaron, and was inveſted with the prieſthood of a higher order. Hebrews, vi. 20, "Even Jeſus made an high prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec." It is undeniable, that the prieſthood was changed from the order of Aaron to a higher order. Hebrews, vii. 12, "For the prieſthood *being changed.*" This change in the prieſthood was completed at the death of Chriſt. The baptiſm of Chriſt by John was the inaugural rite, by which he was regularly introduced to his prieſtly office, or rather publicly and openly declared to be the true Meſſiah.

Though Chriſt received an unchangeable prieſthood, yet the Levitical prieſthood was not aboliſhed, nor was a change made in the law, until the death of Chriſt. The Jewiſh ritual remained till Chriſt offered a better ſacrifice, than could be offered under the legal diſpenſation. Hebrews, x. 12, "But this man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God."

* Chaplin, page 97.

3. The baptism of Christ by John may be considered as necessary to his visible consecration to office. Had not Christ entered upon his public ministry, in such a manner, as to shew that he was the true Messiah; had he not been consecrated according to divine appointment, the Jews would not have been censurable in rejecting him. Christ entered upon his public office in a regular manner, and according to divine rule. John was designated, as the proper officer to administer baptism to him, and his baptism, with its attending circumstances, was his visible consecration to office. Here then you see the principal design of Christ's baptism by John. It was the rite, which denoted his consecration to the high office to which he was introduced. Hebrews, vii. 28, "For the law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

4. The frequent allusions to the ancient inaugurations of prophets, priests, and kings, justify us in considering the baptism of Christ, as the introductory ceremony to his office as Messiah. Allusions to ancient usages and ceremonies are frequent in the New Testament.

It cannot be doubted that the number of the apostles was twelve, in allusion to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. It is probable, that seventy other disciples were sent out after the apostles, in allusion to the number of the Jewish sanhedrim. In the epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus is represented as the christian lawgiver, in allusion to Moses, and the christian high priest, in allusion to Aaron; and preferred to both of them, being called an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchis-

edec. And elſewhere Jeſus is called the great high prieſt of our profeſſion. I ſhall here give you my ſentiments in the words of a learned writer.* "The two things with which our Lord was baptized, were water and the holy Spirit. Let it be further obſerved, that the Jewiſh high prieſt, and the other prieſts of that nation, were initiated into their ſacred office by baptiſm, or being waſhed with water. See Exodus, xxix. 4, Leviticus, viii. 6, 7, and their anointed with oil, which was poured upon the high prieſt's head. Exodus, xxix. 7, Leviticus, viii. 12, and xvi. 32; to which there is a fine alluſion, Pſalm, xxxiii. 2. Our Lord, as has been abundantly obſerved, is a high prieſt of a higher order than that of the family of Aaron. And after he had been baptized, or waſhed with water, he was anointed with the ſacred unction of the holy Spirit, that *oil* of *gladneſs above his fellows*. For he received the Spirit, in a more honourable manner, and in greater plenty, than any of the prophets. They had it in a limited degree, but Jeſus without meaſure. If we conſider him as the great prophet of the church, then we may remember, that he was initiated into that high and ſacred office by baptiſm and the holy Spirit."

At his baptiſm he was endued with the power of working miracles. Thus qualified, he began his miniſtry. It had been propheſied of him, many ages before, Iſaiah, lxi. 1, 2, where the prophet introduced the Meſſiah, as ſpeaking and ſaying concerning himſelf, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." This very paſſage our Lord read in the ſynagogue at Caper-

* Dr. Benſon's Life of Chriſt.

naum, and declared it to be a prophesy concerning himself, which was then actually fulfilled, Luke, iv. 16. In allusion to that, he is called, Acts, iv. 27, God's holy Son, or servant, whom he anointed. The word Messiah in Hebrew, and Christ in Greek, signifies the anointed. And christians, who in the apostolic age had so generally miraculous gifts of the Spirit, are said also, 2 Corinthians, i. 21, to be anointed of God. And in John, to have had an unction from the Holy One.

Kings also used to be inaugurated, by being anointed with oil. Thus God expressed himself concerning David, the progenitor of the Messiah, Psalm, lxxxix. 20, "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him." And our blessed Lord, who was set upon the throne of David, and who was actually king of this spiritual kingdom, was anointed at his baptism with the holy Spirit, that oil of gladness above his fellows. So that, in whichsoever of his offices we view the blessed Jesus, whether as prophet, priest, or king, the baptism with the holy Spirit was highly proper, to initiate him into his high, sacred, and distinguished ministry.

Taking into consideration the numerous allusions to the ancient ceremonies, at the inauguration of prophets, priests, and kings, it is natural to conclude, that the baptism of Jesus by John was his regular introduction to his office, as the Messiah. It was fulfilling righteousness, in relation to the law, for consecrating men to the priestly office. It was a practical conformity to divine directions, for introducing men to the priesthood. Christ was "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

SERMON II.

ACTS, XVIII. 25.

KNOWING ONLY THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

THE inquiry, respecting the baptism of Christ by John, being finished, it now remains to consider John's baptism, and that used by the disciples under our Lord's ministry. And here I shall be understood to speak of John's baptism, when administered to the Jewish nation, including the baptism of the disciples under the direction of Christ. "Though Jesus himself baptized not," yet his disciples, for a time, did baptize. The main question now to be decided, is, whether John's baptism is to be placed under the christian, or legal dispensation. In other words, was John's baptism christian baptism? I answer, it was not. The following reasons are now offered to prove, that John's baptism was not christian baptism.

1. The ends proposed by John's baptism were different from those of New Testament baptism. The principal design of John's baptism was to manifest, or point out Christ to the Jewish nation.—John i. 31. "And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." But New Testament

baptiſm is deſigned for other purpoſes. Believers are ſaid to be baptized into the death of Chriſt. Romans, vi. 3 "Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death?" John's baptiſm could not be uſed for this purpoſe. For Chriſt was not crucified.

2. John's whole miniſtry muſt be placed under the legal diſpenſation. John was a prophet, but he lived and died under the legal diſpenſation.—John the Baptiſt was a miniſter of the Jewiſh, not the chriſtian church. Luke, vii. 28, "For verily I ſay unto you, among thoſe that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptiſt: but he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Theſe words evidently ſuppoſe that John's miniſtry pertained to the legal diſpenſation. They make John one of the greateſt prophets, who had ever appeared under the Moſaic eſtabliſhment; but they make him inferior to the leaſt in the goſpel kingdom.

As John was the laſt prophet under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, he lived, as it were, in ſight of goſpel times, and therefore was the greateſt prophet that had ariſen; but compared with the goſpel ſtate, he was inferior to the leaſt in the goſpel kingdom.

Chriſt, therefore, places John's miniſtry under the Moſaic economy. John ſeemed to conſider himſelf and his miniſtry in this light, when he ſpoke of himſelf and of Chriſt. John, ii. 30, "He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe." By which he intimated, that the diſpenſation, under which he miniſtered, was about to come to an end. The concluſion is, that as John is placed back in times anterior to the goſpel day, he did not adminiſter ordinances peculiar to the goſpel church. Therefore his baptiſm was not chriſtian baptiſm.

3. The legal dispensation actually continued till the crucifixion of Christ. Much has been said in favour of giving an earlier date to gospel times. It is presumed, however, that no man would plead in support of this scheme, unless he were driven to it, in defence of some peculiar favourite tenets.

In opposition to the system, which makes the gospel kingdom commence under the ministry of John the Baptist, I bring forward the example and doctrine of Christ. Christ, throughout his whole ministry, both yielded and taught obedience to the ceremonial part of the Jewish law. He attended the appointed feasts. He kept the Jewish passover with his disciples, even the very night in which he was betrayed. To the cleansed leper he said, Matthew, viii. 4, "But go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift, that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." Did our Lord teach obedience to rites, which were already abolished? If the ceremonial part of the law was abrogated; if gospel times had commenced, why did he give an example of obedience to the ceremonial law? Why did he teach and practise in conformity to the Jewish ritual, if it was done away? The Jewish rites and ceremonies were in being during the ministry of Christ, or they were not. If they were set aside, why did Christ give them support, by his example and direction? Without hesitation, it may be declared, that the legal dispensation, with all the Jewish ritual, continued through the ministry of Christ, even to his death. It remained in full force until the vail of the temple was rent in twain. This is clearly the doctrine of the Bible. Hebrews, ix. 8, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

Here it may be obſerved, that the firſt tabernacle was ſtanding till the death of Chriſt. Gifts and ſacrifices might be offered in it, till the death and crucifixion of Chriſt. Therefore the goſpel diſpenſation did not commence until Chriſt put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. This receives confirmation from the following words, Hebrews, ix. 16, 17, "For where a teſtament is, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator. For a teſtament is of force after men are dead; otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all while the teſtator liveth." According to theſe words, New Teſtament times cannot be dated earlier than the death of Chriſt. For a teſtament does not begin its operation till the death of the teſtator. The death of the teſtator is neceſſary to give life and exiſtence to the teſtament. Common ſenſe teaches us, that a teſtament does not begin to be in force while the teſtator liveth.

In order to explain away the import of this text, it may be ſaid, as ſome have affirmed, "that a teſtament is made, ſigned, ſealed, and witneſſed, before the teſtator dies, and he whoſe will is a ſovereign law, to govern in all the concerns of his teſtament, may, if he pleaſe, bring things into that ſtate before his death, which he intends they ſhould be in afterwards."* This author aſſerts that the teſtator's will is a ſovereign law. I add, it is while he lives. His will, and not his teſtament is the law, during his life, but this does not prove, that the teſtament of the teſtator becomes a law during his life. It does not. Therefore according to this writers ſtatement, New Teſtament times did not begin till the death of Chriſt. Conſequently John's baptiſm belonged to the legal, not the chriſtian diſpenſation.

* Edward Clark.

4. The commiſſions with which the twelve and the ſeventy diſciples were furniſhed during our Lord's miniſtry, afford additional evidence, that John's baptiſm belonged to the legal diſpenſation. The commiſſions which the twelve and the ſeventy diſciples received from Chriſt are recorded, Matthew, x. 5—14, Luke, ix. 1—5, Mark, iii. 14, 15, and Luke, x. 1—11. Here are all the inſtances of Chriſt's ſending out his diſciples to preach. In their commiſſion, we find ſeveral particular directions given the diſciples, for the rule of their conduct. Their whole duty was pointed out. They were authorized to do all that Chriſt wanted them to do. But they were not authorized to baptize.—The adminiſtration of baptiſm was not included among the articles of their inſtruction. The omiſſion of baptiſm cannot be imputed to forgetfulneſs, but to deſign. Had John's baptiſm, or the baptiſm uſed by the diſciples under Chriſt's direction, been chriſtian baptiſm, or had the chriſtian diſpenſation begun its operation, we ſhould have found a command for baptizing in the inſtructions given to the twelve and the ſeventy. For New Teſtament baptiſm is an ordinance of the goſpel, and as ſoon as the New Teſtament diſpenſation commenced, Chriſt commanded his diſciples to teach and to baptize. Matthew, xxviii. 19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt." Whoever will carefully examine the particular directions, which our Lord gave to the twelve and the ſeventy diſciples, will find, that he did not deſign that his diſciples, at that time, ſhould adminiſter baptiſm. The omiſſion of baptiſm, in our Lord's inſtructions to his diſciples, on this occaſion,

evidently ſupports the concluſion, that John's baptiſm was not chriſtian baptiſm. Chriſtian baptiſm could not begin, till there was a command for it. There was no command for it, in the forementioned inſtructions to the diſciples; conſequently neither John's baptiſm, nor the baptiſm uſed by the diſciples under our Lord's directions, was chriſtian baptiſm.

5. It is evident, that John's baptiſm belonged to the legal diſpenſation, becauſe there was no inſtance of water baptiſm, from about the time of John's impriſonment to the reſurrection of Chriſt. From the death of John, till the reſurrection of Chriſt, there was an interval, or ſpace of conſiderable length, in which no mention is made of the practice of an inſtance of water baptiſm. In this ſeaſon, there were doubtleſs proper ſubjects for baptiſm. The want of inſtances of baptiſm, it is probable, is not to be aſcribed to the want of proper ſubjects.

Neither muſt the omiſſion of baptiſm be imputed to the neglect of the diſciples. For had it been the fault of the diſciples, Chriſt would undoubtedly have reproved them for their negligence. But no reproof of this nature is found in the Evangeliſts. When the ſeventy returned to Chriſt, and gave him ſome account of their miſſion, our Lord did not ſuggeſt to them any failure in their duty, or the omiſſion of any performance, which pertained to their office. We are therefore juſtified, in ſuppoſing, that the diſciples did not baptize, in this ſpace of time, becauſe Chriſt did not command them to baptize; ſince therefore we find no inſtance of John's baptiſm, or that of the diſciples, or any other water baptiſm, from the death of John to the reſur-

rection of Chriſt, we have ſatisfactory evidence, that no water baptiſm, before the reſurrection of Chriſt, was chriſtian baptiſm.

6. John's baptiſm was not chriſtian baptiſm, becauſe it was not performed in the name of the Holy Trinity. This needs no proof. Chriſt was not declared to be the Meſſiah when John began his miniſtry. But the ſubject is placed beyond doubt in the account given us, Acts, xix. 1—7, "And Paul finding certain diſciples, ſaid unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghoſt, ſince ye believed? and they ſaid unto him, we have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt. And he ſaid unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? and they ſaid unto John's baptiſm. Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, that they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is on Chriſt Jeſus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus." It may be obſerved, that the twelve diſciples, mentioned in the words now quoted, appeared to be ignorant of the uſe of the Holy Trinity in baptiſm. They ſaid, we have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt. They had been baptized unto John's baptiſm, but appeared not to have heard the Trinity named in their baptiſm. From this conſideration, we may conclude that the Holy Ghoſt was not named in John's baptiſm. Conſequently John's baptiſm was a different kind of baptiſm, from New Teſtament baptiſm. Indeed, the queſtion which Paul aſked them, ſuppoſed there were different kinds of baptiſm. If not, what propriety was there in his queſtion?

Moreover, the twelve disciples before mentioned were *rebaptized.* This is plain. For when Paul had explained to them the nature of John's baptism, and told them, that it was merely preparatory to their receiving Christ, then they were again baptized by Paul. What further proof is wanting to convince us, that John's baptism was not christian baptism. For had it been the same kind of baptism, which is used under the gospel dispensation, it would have been needless and unwarrantable to repeat it.

In this place, give me leave to recite to you the words of Dr. Benson upon the subject. "When Paul had finished his journey through the upper part of Asia Minor, he returned to Ephesus, and there found twelve persons that were the disciples of John the Baptist. And being willing to impart unto them some spiritual gifts, if they had not received any already, he asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost. They replied, that they had not so much as heard, that the Holy Ghost had been poured out, or that any person had been baptized therewith, as John the Baptist had predicted. No, saith the apostle; not without wonder and surprize; what not so much as heard of the effusion of the Holy Ghost? Pray, unto what then were ye baptized? They answered, we have been baptized only unto John's baptism. The apostle said, John did indeed prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, by baptizing with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. When they heard this, they were baptized again, and that in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

A late author, * to evade the force of the argu-

* Dr. Baldwin.

ment drawn from this paſſage of ſcripture, makes the account given in theſe verſes, Paul's account of John's doctrine and baptiſm. This certainly makes nonſenſe of the account. For it is ſaying, that thoſe on whom Paul laid his hands were the people whom John taught, and that all the men whom John taught were about twelve.

It is undeniable, that theſe twelve perſons whom Paul found, were baptized again. It is alſo probable, that ſome of the three thouſand, who were baptized on the day of pentecoſt, had been baptized before by John. For they were Jews and Jewiſh proſelytes, ſome of whom had lived in Judea, and had been concerned in the murder of Chriſt. As John's baptiſm had been adminiſtered to the greater part of the Jewiſh nation, doubtleſs many of theſe converts had received John's baptiſm. If then it be admitted, that ſome, who had been baptized by John, were baptized again after the reſurrection of Chriſt, it follows, that the apoſtles did not conſider John's baptiſm to be chriſtian baptiſm. There is abundant evidence to ſupport the belief, that John's baptiſm belonged to the Jewiſh, and not to the chriſtian diſpenſation.

1. From what has been ſaid upon this ſubject, we learn that neither John's baptizing the Jews, nor his baptizing our Lord, are examples for our imitation. Baptiſts are fond of taking a ſtand near the waters of Enon and Jordan. They ſay much about following Chriſt down the banks of Jordan. A late author* has traced the origin of the baptiſts to Enon and Jordan. This man is uncommonly ſanguine in his aſſertions, and for one who had, according to his own declaration, but juſt emerged

* Mr. Merril's Seven Sermons.

from darkneſs, ſeems by no means to abound with modeſty. In his hiſtory of the baptiſts, he carries back their origin to John the Baptiſt. The ſame imagination, which could form the image of baptiſts at ſo early a period, might, if the ſame reaſon had urged him, drove him back to the antediluvian age, and there found the name, or the ſubſtance of the baptiſt religion among the people of the old world. He has told us, that great and learned men have been perplexed to find when the baptiſts firſt began. But ſtrange! his imagination could ſurmount all difficulties, and without proof or evidence make the origin of the baptiſt religion coeval with John the Baptiſt. What he calls a miniature hiſtory of the baptiſts is mere conjecture, unſupported by teſtimony. With as much propriety, another man might conjecture, that the name and ſubſtance of the baptiſt religion was unknown in the world, till after the twelfth century. But notwithſtanding all that this author has ſaid to the contrary, it may be aſſerted, that no man has authority to adminiſter chriſtian baptiſm from any command or example which exiſted before the reſurrection of Chriſt. The authority for adminiſtering chriſtian baptiſm is derived from the commiſſion which our Lord gave to the apoſtles, after he aroſe from the dead. Matthew, xxviii. 19, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt." John's baptiſm belonged to the legal diſpenſation. We may not imitate Chriſt in his baptiſm. For it was not deſigned for our imitation. There is as much authority for following Chriſt in his faſting forty days—walking upon the water—riding into Jeruſalem on an aſs—work-

ing miracles—dying between two thieves—or making his grave with the rich in his death, as in his baptism by John. In opposition to the sentiment now advanced, baptist writers urge, with the appearance of plausibility, that the gospel kingdom began its operation with John's ministry. It must always be evidence that a cause labours, when it is necessary to press in its support, arguments which are false, or to deny what is fully revealed in the Holy Scriptures. One author* in the baptist interest, with apparently greater zeal for the defence of his peculiar tenets, than love to the truth, has denied that Christ was a Jew. This seems to be done to prove that the gospel began with John's ministry. After quoting from a late publication these words, "Christ was *born a Jew, he lived a Jew, and died a Jew*," he then makes the following assertion; "This in a literal sense is false."—But who, even on the baptist side of the question, will give credit to such assertions? Jesus said, Revelation, xxii. 16, "I am the root and the offspring of David." The apostle said, Hebrews, vii. 14, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda." If then David was a Jew, Christ was a *Jew*. If the tribe of Judah were Jews, Christ was a *Jew*. Moreover, Christ was called a *Jew*, and taken to be a *Jew*. John iv. 9, "How is it that thou being a *Jew*, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" He was called the king of the Jews. Pray for what purpose did Matthew and Luke, in their gospels, trace the genealogy of Christ? To prove that he was not the Son of David? No: but to prove that he was the seed of David according to promise.

* Mr. Edward Clark of Medfield.

Another writer,* who pleads ſtrongly in favour of making the goſpel diſpenſation begin with John's miniſtry, has ſupported his opinion, by an argument drawn from the four firſt verſes of the firſt chapter of Mark: a ſlender argument in ſupport of a hypotheſis of ſuch magnitude. The words in Mark are theſe; "The beginning of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets," &c. But why did not this author carry back the goſpel diſpenſation to Abraham's time? He might have proved with as much force of argument, that the goſpel began in Abraham's day, as he has that it began with John the Baptiſt. The goſpel was preached to Abraham. He has evidently forced a conſtruction upon the four firſt verſes in Mark, which may ſeem plauſible, but which will not bear examination. All his argument reſts upon the word beginning of the goſpel. Read it as it means, and his argument is loſt. The beginning of the narration of thoſe facts which reſpect the miniſtry of John and Jeſus Chriſt. Beginning here refers to the relation of facts, and not to the time when the goſpel kingdom commenced. The kingdom of God was not yet come, when John began his miniſtry. John himſelf only ſaid it was at hand.

The ſame writer proves that the goſpel diſpenſation began with John's miniſtry, becauſe it is ſaid, Luke, xvi. 16, The law and the prophets were until John.

The meaning of this text is explained by its parallel, Matthew, xi. 13, For all the prophets and the law propheſied until John. That is, the law and the prophets foretold thoſe things which

* Dr. Baldwin.

ſhould take place in John's time. The law and the prophets pointed out John, and the Meſſiah who was to come after him. This by no means proves that the legal diſpenſation ceaſed upon the approach of John. For the ceremonial law was not taken out of the way till the death of Chriſt. Coloſſians, ii. 14, "And took it out of the way, nailing it to the croſs." And the New Teſtament could not begin till the death of Chriſt, conſequently the legal diſpenſation continued till the death of Chriſt. "For a teſtament is of force after men are dead; otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all while the teſtator liveth." There is therefore no authority for imitating Chriſt in his baptiſm by John.

2. From this diſcourſe, it appears that we cannot aſcertain the mode of chriſtian baptiſm from the adminiſtration of John's baptiſm.

I know that writers on the baptiſt ſide ſeem to conſider it improper to inquire after the mode of baptiſm. They ſay that baptiſm is immerſion. They ſay to dip is to baptize, and to baptize is to dip. According to them, if I underſtand them, baptiſm, in no caſe, can exiſt unleſs by immerſion. But this is the queſtion in diſpute. We ſay, and we think the ſcriptures juſtify us in ſaying, that there are divers baptiſms. We ſay, that immerſion, affuſion, and aſperſion, are called baptiſm. But be it as they ſay, ſtill we have no authority to plead John's baptiſm, in ſupport of immerſion, under the goſpel. Becauſe John's baptiſm belonged to the legal diſpenſation. And further, it is by no means certain, that John's baptiſm was performed by immerſion. If Chriſt's baptiſm by John had alluſion to the inaugural ceremonies at the introduction of the high prieſt, it is doubtful whether he was

plunged all over in water. We find that only the hands and the feet of the prieſts were waſhed with water. John ſaid to the Jews, Matthew, iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water,—but he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire." Conſider a moment, what John ſaid to the Jewiſh nation, and keep in mind that the Jews knew perfectly well the manner of John's adminiſtering baptiſm. Let us then ſuppoſe, as the baptiſts do, that John baptized by plunging, and then read his words, as the baptiſts will have us read them. I indeed plunge you all over into water, but Chriſt ſhall plunge you all over into the Spirit. What abſurdity! Read them as we ſay they muſt be read. I indeed pour water upon you, but Chriſt ſhall pour the Spirit upon you. This reading will be natural and intelligible.

Certainly there is a correſpondence between the ancient cuſtom of anointing with oil, and baptiſm with the Holy Ghoſt. Chriſtians are all baptized with the Holy Ghoſt. They are all anointed of God. But it is difficult to attach the idea of immerſion to this unction, or baptiſm. Nothing can be gathered from John's baptiſm, in ſupport of baptiſm by immerſion.

3. In the light of this ſubject, it appears that baptiſm by immerſion only, is not ſufficiently ſupported by expreſs ſcripture declarations. It muſt be conſidered, that the queſtion is, what does the Bible teach us upon this ſubject? If you have recourſe to remote antiquity, teſtimony againſt teſtimony may be produced. Criticiſm upon the original words uſed for baptiſm, may be employed in ſupport of a favourite theory, and a long liſt of names of pædobaptiſt authors may be added, to prove that baptiſm

is immerſion. But a reſort to ſuch means will never decide the main queſtion. Saith a modern author, "But when an article of chriſtian doctrine of momentous importance, is either aſſailed or defended by criticiſm alone, there is always ſomething ſuſpicious." Much, indeed, has been ſaid on our ſide of the queſtion, againſt the baptiſts, for excluding all chriſtians from their communion, who do not unite with them, in believing that chriſtian baptiſm is immerſion. It is true that ſerious and extenſive evils reſult from a rigid adherence to this ſentiment. Their excluding all pædobaptiſts from a viſible ſtanding in the church of Chriſt, creates coldneſs, and excites jealouſies among brethren. In conſequence of their rigid adherence to their peculiar notions of baptiſm, the baptiſts and pædobaptiſts act, in many reſpects, in oppoſition to one another, and weaken and deſtroy one another. They loſe all that energy, which their united influence would give them. But great and ſerious as theſe evils are, the baptiſts are entirely conſiſtent with their own ſyſtem. If baptiſm be immerſion only, then all who are not immerſed are unbaptized. Their practice, in treating pædobaptiſts as unbaptized perſons, reſults from the belief that nothing is baptiſm but immerſion. Grant them their creed reſpecting this ſubject, and grant them too, that baptiſm is a term of chriſtian communion, and they are ſhielded to the heel. Their errour is, their maintaining that baptiſm, in all caſes, is immerſion. This is certainly taking a ſtand which can never be ſupported by expreſs ſcripture authority. Where, in all the Bible, is it ſaid, in ſo many words, that baptiſm ſhall be adminiſtered after this or that manner? When our Lord gave directions concern-

ing prayer, he ſaid, "After this manner therefore pray ye." Had there been the like explicit declarations, in favour of baptiſm by immerſion, the cauſe would be decided in ſupport of the baptiſts. But ſince this poſitive declaration concerning baptiſm by immerſion is wanting; ſince baptiſm does not, in all caſes, mean the total immerſion of the thing baptized; ſince it is certain that, in ſome inſtances, baptiſm means no more than the application of water, either by aſperſion or affuſion, it undoubtedly follows, that the baptiſts aſſume too much to themſelves. Accuracy in faith reſts upon the authority on which it is built. If there is poſitive divine declarations, in ſupport of our creed, we are not chargeable with error, in poſitively maintaining our belief. If a ſubject be left undecided, as to the manner of performing it, no man may be poſitive, in declaring how it ſhall be performed. Had the baptiſts embraced immerſion, as in their opinion the ſcriptural baptiſm, and not have poſitively denied that affuſion was ſcriptural baptiſm, they would have exhibited a modeſty much more becoming chriſtians than what now appears in their writings. Since the baptiſts are not able to bring poſitive concluſive proof, that in all caſes baptiſm in the New Teſtament does mean immerſion only, they ſeem to be tenacious of an article of their faith, not ſo much becauſe they have ſcriptural reaſons for it, as becauſe it is a favourite idea in their ſcheme.

Take away John's baptiſm, as an example, and the conſequence is, they muſt reſort to times ſucceeding the reſurrection of Chriſt, to determine whether baptiſm is immerſion or not. It has already been obſerved, that there is no proof, that

John baptized by immerſion. Conſider candidly the inſtance of Paul's baptiſm, Acts, ix. 9—18. Paul appears to have been baptized in the ſame place, where he had remained three days.

The circumſtances attending his baptiſm, are ſuch as naturally lead us to think that he never went out of the houſe to receive baptiſm. "And he received ſight forthwith, and aroſe and was baptized." No man, in reading the account of Paul's converſion and baptiſm, would ever ſuppoſe that he was plunged all over in water.

It is highly improbable, that the jailer and his houſe were baptized by immerſion. Paul and Silas had been confined in the inner priſon. The jailer brought them out of the inner priſon, and probably placed them in his own apartment. It was a late hour in the night when the jailer was baptized. It is not ſaid that they went out of the houſe to a river or to any water. Nothing is ſaid about their return to the houſe again. Nothing is ſaid about their changing garments on this occaſion. Nothing is ſaid, which makes it even probable, that their baptiſm was performed by immerſion. Peter's ſpeech, at the baptiſm of Cornelius and his friends, imports the application of water in a manner different from immerſion. "Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as me?"

This form of ſpeech, taken in connection with their being baptized at the command of Peter, makes it probable that they were baptized in the ſame place where they were; and that water was brought in ſome veſſel for the purpoſe.

Without having recourſe to other inſtances of ſimilar import, it may be obſerved, that there is no poſitive proof that baptiſm, in the apoſtolic age, was in any caſe performed by immerſion. It certainly cannot be proved that immerſion was invariably in uſe, from any circumſtances attending the adminiſtration of baptiſm. No mention, in a ſingle caſe, is made of changing garments on the occaſion; a circumſtance, the omiſſion of which it is difficult to account for, upon the ſuppoſition that baptiſm was invariably performed by immerſion.

If any perſon, after all, ſhould believe that the apoſtles baptized by plunging all over in water, becauſe it is ſaid that they reſorted to the water, when they baptized; and at the time of adminiſtering baptiſm, they went down into the water, and came up out of the water, let him conſult the following extract from the Rev. Ebenezer Chaplin's Treatiſe on the Nature and Importance of the Sacraments, relative to the words in queſtion, page 123—127.

"Preſuming on the candour, and indulgence of my readers; I obſerve, that the words under conſideration, are a part of ſpeech called prepoſitions. The Greek word in thoſe places tranſlated *In*, is *En*. The word expreſſing, Jeſus went up *Out of* the water, is *Apo*. The word expreſſing, Philip and the Eunuch went down *Into* the water, is *Eis*. The word expreſſing they went *Out of* the water, is *Ek*.

"Now I could eaſily have told, that theſe prepoſitions, and all others, take various conſtructions, and different words, in tranſlating from one language to another; according to the different circumſtances attending, events related; and according to the different Idioms of languages. And I

could have given a long catalogue, of those various constructions, from the Lexicon and Dictionaries; without costing me any labour. But as those constructions in the Lexicon, are grounded on all the Greek authors extant: and as I from the beginning, professed to go solely by the Scriptures; I have given myself, the trouble, and labour to examine all those four prepositions, through the books wherein they are used, relative to baptism, viz. Mat. Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. I have examined those prepositions, in all those five books, how they are translated in every place, where they are used.* There are of all that I have examined, 2859. *En* is used 1033 times, of which 47, are rendered in adverbs. 25, The sense is involved in other words, so that there is no distinct word in English, answering to *En*, in the Greek. The rest, 964, are rendered in English prepositions, seventeen different ways; viz. *in*, *by*, *with*, *among*, *within*, *for*, *under*, *at*, *through*, *on*, *before*, *unto*, *into*, *of*, *to*, *about*, *over*. It is translated *in*, more than all the rest; but it is rendered *at* 53 times, *by* 44, *with* 42, *among* 45, *on* 30. The rest are less, as 10, 7, &c.

"I will give the reader examples of those I have specified.

Examples of *En* translated.

"IN—Mark, i. 4. John did baptize *En*, *in* the wilderness.

* I have aimed, to make the examination correct; yet very probable, in such a multiplicity of words, there may be some errours: But it may be relied on, there are none such as affect the object in view; viz. to give the common reader, a general Idea, of the various constructions of words, in translating from one language to another.

AT—John, xviii. 39. Ye have a cuſtom, that I ſhould releaſe unto you one *En*, *at* the Paſſover.

" BY—Mat. xii. 27. If I *En*, *by* Beelzebub caſt out Devils, *En*, *by* whom do your children caſt them out.

" WITH—Acts, ii. 29. His ſepulchre, is *En*, *with* us unto this day.

" AMONG—Luke, i. 42. Bleſſed at thou *En*, *among* women.

" ON—Luke, x. 31. And paſſed by *En*, *on* the other ſide.

Apo Examined.

" *Apo*, is the Greek word, tranſlated *out of*, in Mat. iii. 16, and Mark, i. 10. Where it ſays, Jeſus went up *out of* the water. This word *Apo*, I have found uſed 423 times, in thoſe five books I have examined. 6, are rendered adverbs, 11, are involved. The reſt 406, are rendered in Engliſh prepoſitions, thirteen different ways ; viz. *From*, *of*, *out of*, *for*, *ſince*, *off*, *with*, *at*, *away*, *by*, *out*, *ago*, *upon*. It is tranſlated *from*, 235, all the reſt 172 ; ſo that *from* is many more than all the reſt. *Of* 92, *out of* 42, *for* 11, *ſince* 7.

Examples of *Apo* tranſlated.

" FROM—Luke, xvi. 18. Whoſoever marrieth her that is put away, *Apo*, *from* her huſband committeth adultery.

" OF—Mat. vii. 15. Beware *Apo*, *of* falſe prophets.

" OUT OF—Mat. vii. 4. Let me pull out the mote, *Apo*, *out of* thine eye.

" FOR—Luke, xix. 3. And he ſought to ſee Jeſus, who he was, and could not *Apo*, *for* the preſs.

" SINCE—Mat. xxiv. 21. Then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not *Apo*, *ſince* the beginning of the world.

Eis Examined.

" *Eis*, is the Greek word, tranſlated *into*, Acts, viii. 38, Where it ſays, they went down both *into* the water.

" This word *Eis*, I find uſed 955 times, in thoſe five firſt books of the New Teſtament. 17, are rendered adverbs. 36 are involved. The reſt 902, are rendered in Engliſh prepoſitions, ſeventeen different ways; viz. *Into*, *in*, *unto*, *to*, *for*, *of*, *by*, *among*, *againſt*, *at*, *upon*, *toward*, *throughout*, *on*, *from*, *concerning*, *before*. It is rendered *into* 388, *to* 188, *unto* 97, *in* 86, *on* 45, *for* 23, *at* 18, *againſt* 18, the reſt are leſs, as 10, 8, &c.

Examples of *Eis* tranſlated.

" INTO—John, iii. 24. For John was not yet caſt *Eis*, *into* priſon.

" TO—John, ii. 2. And both Jeſus was called, and his diſciples *Eis*, *to* the marriage.

" UNTO—John, vii. 8. Go ye up *Eis*, *unto* this feaſt.

" IN—Acts, viii. 23. For I perceive that thou art *Eis*, *in* the gaul of bitterneſs.

" ON—Mark, xiv. 6. She hath wrought a good work *Eis*, *on* me.

" FOR—Mat. v. 13. It is thenceforth good *Eis*, *for* nothing.

" AT—Luke, iv. 61. But let me firſt go, and bid them farewell, which are *Eis*, *at* home.

" AGAINST—John, xii. 7. *Eis*, *againſt* the day of my burial hath ſhe done this.

Ek, Examined.

" *Ek* is the Greek word in Acts, viii. 39, tranſlated *out of*. And when they came up *Ek*, *out of* the Water.

" This is found 446 times, in thoſe five firſt books of the New Teſtament. 4, are rendered adverbs, 6, are involved. The remainder 435, are rendered in Engliſh prepoſitions, thirteen different ways ; viz. *Of*, *out of*, *from*, *among*, *by*, *for*, *on*, *away*, *with*, *off*, *unto*, *ſince*, *at*. It is rendered *of* 191, *from* 102, *out of* 77, *on* 30, *with* 17, the reſt are leſs, 6, 4, &c.

Examples of *Ek* tranſlated.

" OF—John, i. 13. Which were born not *Ex*,* *of* blood, nor *Ek*, *of* the will of the fleſh, nor *Ek*, *of* the will of man : But *Ek*, *of* God.

" FROM—John, vi. 66. *Ek*, *from* that time, many of his diſciples went back.

" OUT OF—Acts, vii. 3. Get thee *Ek*, *out of* thy country.

" ON—Acts, ii. 34. The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou *Ek*, *on* my right hand.

" WITH—Acts, viii. 37. If thou believeſt *Ek*, *with* all thy heart, thou mayeſt."

Now unto him who is able to keep us from falling into errours—to God our Saviour be glory in the churches, world without end,

AMEN.

* This is *Ex* before a vowel, *Ek* before a conſonant.

FIVE SERMONS

ON

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM;

IN WHICH THE

PRIVILEGE OF BELIEVERS,

UNDER THE GOSPEL,

RESPECTING THE

MODE AND SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM,

IS ESTABLISHED AND ILLUSTRATED.

BY JEDIDIAH CHAPMAN, *V. D. M.*

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT ORANGE DALE.

SERMON I.

ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

MATTHEW, XXVIII. 19, 20.

GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST;—TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

My dear friends, and beloved brethren,

IT is my present design to address you on the serious and important subject of Baptism.—Treating this point, as God shall enable me, in a course of sermons, I shall endeavor to handle the subject with great plainness and candor, not seeking so much the applause of man, or the conviction of those who differ from us, as the establishment of your minds in the truth. The words which I have now read are joyful, solemn words. They were spoken in a very affecting situation—they are some of the last words of our blessed Lord and Saviour to his dear disciples. In the preced-

ing chapter, we have an account of his crucifixion and painful death on the croſs—In this, of his joyful reſurrection and appearance to the apoſtles, whom he informed of his acceptance with God as the Mediator and Saviour, and of his great power in heaven and earth. He gave them the commiſſion in our text—" Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt;—Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

I ſhall here mention ſeveral things of great importance to the ſubject before us, in which all parties agree; and beg you will keep them in view through the enſuing diſcourſes.

Firſt, Our bleſſed Saviour's command, in this text, is equally binding on all his miniſters, in all ages of the world—that they are to preach the goſpel to every creature, and to teach all who are capable of inſtruction, in all the doctrines he has revealed in his word.

Second, The miniſters of Chriſt are to baptize among the nations, " in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt," all thoſe, and only thoſe, who, according to his revealed will, are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm.

Third, All his miniſters, by this, are bound to teach the nations to obſerve and obey all things, whatſoever he hath commanded; all the laws, ordinances, and inſtitutions, which, according to the ſcriptures, are in force under the goſpel diſpenſation.

Fourth, Let it be well obſerved, that according to this promiſe, Chriſt will be with *his* miniſters, to

ſupport and comfort them—to bleſs and ſucceed them in the glorious work unto the end of the world. Theſe things being obſerved, I ſhall proceed to conſider our text, with reference only to the ſacrament of baptiſm—and ſhall endeavor to ſhew,

I. That baptiſm with water is an inſtitution of Chriſt, to be a ſtanding ordinance in his church to the end of the world.

II. I ſhall ſpeak of the mode of baptiſm as it reſpects the controverſy between us and our brethren called Baptiſts.

I. I am to ſpeak of water-baptiſm, and ſhew that it is an inſtitution of Chriſt, to be a ſtanding ordinance in the church to the end of the world.

There is a baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire, agreeably to Mark, i. 8. "I, indeed, have baptized you with water, but he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt." Luke, iii. 16. "He ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire." But its adminiſtration Chriſt has reſerved to himſelf. We no where read of his commanding any to adminiſter ſuch a baptiſm. Some, indeed, ſince the apoſtles' day, have undertaken to do it; but we expect they will ſtand reproved in the great day of the Lord.

That baptiſm by water is an inſtitution of Chriſt, is very evident from our text. "Go, ſays Chriſt, teach, or diſciple all nations, baptizing them," &c. They are commanded to teach, and they are commanded to baptize. The ſame precept is alſo recorded, Mark, xvi. 15, 16. "And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel unto every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned."—We accordingly find

the apoſtles, and primitive miniſters of Chriſt, baptizing all whom they diſciplined to him. On the day of Pentecoſt, when three thouſand were added to the church in one day, the apoſtles called on them to repent, and be baptized. The Quakers, and ſome others, deny that baptiſm with water is to be continued in the church; but the contrary ſeems evident, from the very face of the command. The apoſtles, and ſucceeding miniſters of Chriſt, were commanded to teach, to preach the goſpel, and to baptize all nations; and in faithfully teaching and baptizing, Chriſt promiſes to be with them to the end of the world. Our bleſſed Saviour, likewiſe, expreſsly enjoins on the apoſtles, to teach his diſciples to obſerve all things whatſoever he hath commanded them; but baptiſm by water was the command which had juſt then proceeded from his ſacred lips. It is manifeſt that the primitive church received the practice from the apoſtles, and obſerved it is a command of Chriſt.

The deſign of baptiſm as a ſeal of the covenant, and badge of the Chriſtian profeſſion—its uſe as an initiating ordinance into the church, and its obvious ſignification, all plainly ſhew it to be a ſtanding inſtitution in the church, and to be adminiſtered with water, to all proper ſubjects, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt," by all the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt.

II. I am now to ſpeak of the mode of baptiſm.

Before I proceed, two remarks are worthy of particular notice.

1. As baptiſm is merely a poſitive inſtitution of Chriſt, nothing, with regard to its mode, ſhould be made eſſential, but what Chriſt has expreſsly enjoined. This obſervation muſt be too evident to meet

with any oppoſition. Should any think this or that mode moſt decent, convenient, or ſignificant, let them anſwer a good conſcience, where the ſcriptures are ſilent; but let them not make it eſſential to baptiſm, unleſs it is expreſsly enjoined by Chriſt.

2. No denomination of Chriſtians has a right to ſet up one mode of baptiſm as eſſential, and exclude all other modes without expreſs ſcripture warrant, or ſome poſitive proof, that it is the will of Chriſt, the great king and head of the church. The reaſon of this is plain. Since it is the prerogative of Chriſt to appoint the ordinances of his church, it muſt belong to him alone to determine, what ſhould be conſidered eſſential to them. For any, therefore, to determine the excluſive mode of baptiſm, or make any thing eſſential to it, which Chriſt himſelf has not appointed, is not only very uncharitable to their brethren, but alſo a great preſumption on the prerogative of Chriſt. Our brethren, the Baptiſts, my hearers, hold with us, that baptiſm muſt be adminiſtered, by a regular miniſter of Chriſt, with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; but, they aſſert, that it muſt be done in the mode of dipping, or plunging the whole body under water, otherwiſe it would be no chriſtian baptiſm. Let us now candidly examine this matter. The queſtion is not, whether dipping or plunging is baptiſm, but whether plunging or dipping is the only mode of chriſtian baptiſm. It is not ſufficient for them to prove in the cleareſt manner, that plunging is a proper mode of baptiſm; but they ought to prove, and muſt prove, if they do any thing to the purpoſe, that plunging is the only mode of baptiſm by water inſtituted by Chriſt. Inattention to this circumſtance,

I believe, has been the occaſion of much doubt and confuſion in the minds of ſome, if not the ſource of real impoſition, in this point, on many chriſtians. But, I hope, your minds may be free from all ſuch impoſitions, and that you may be able, in the truth, to ſtand faſt in the liberty where-with Chriſt has made you free.

Let us now, keeping theſe things in view, conſider the words of the inſtitution, as we have them in our text. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Here we have the plain command to baptize, but not any thing poſitive reſpecting the mode. Does this prove that plunging is the only ſcripture baptiſm?—Would not one of the baptiſts have expreſſed it differently, if he deſigned to eſtabliſh dipping the body under water as the only mode of baptiſm? Since the baptiſts aſſert, that the true meaning of the word baptize, is to dip or plunge under water, this muſt command ſome attention; but as it will lead us back to the original language in which the goſpel was written, waters too deep for moſt of you, my dear hearers, I ſhall firſt lead you where you may ſee for yourſelves.

1. We aſſert, that the word baptize does not now generally ſignify to plunge or dip any thing under water; nor is it any where confined to this ſignification alone, but among the baptiſts.—They ſay, on the contrary, that we have perverted the word to ſupport our own practice.—We therefore aſſert,

2. That the word baptize did not, in our Saviour's time, always ſignify plunging or dipping. Luke, xi. 38, "And, when the Phariſee ſaw it, he marvelled, that he had not firſt waſhed before dinner;" or, as it is in the original, that he was not firſt baptized. We all know that *baptizing* here does not mean the dipping or plunging of the whole body under water, but only the waſhing of the hands. But is the word baptize here miſapplied and perverted? Who has done it?

It is alſo certain, that this word is uſed by inſpiration to ſignify divers waſhing without any reference to the mode, Mark, vii. 4, "And from the market, except they baptize or waſh, they eat not." The word *baptiſmous*, in this and the eighth verſe, deſerves particular attention. Being in the plural number, it muſt ſignify various modes of waſhing, of cups, pots, brazen veſſels, and of tables. The word is likewiſe applied to the many kinds of ceremonial waſhings. Heb. ix. 10. "Only in meats and drinks, and divers baptiſms or waſhings." Some of theſe waſhings or cleanſings were performed by pouring, others by ſprinkling, and ſome of them could not be done by dipping or plunging.

There are many other places in the ſcriptures where the word is uſed to ſignify any kind of waſhing or cleanſing, even where there is no dipping. Some of our brethren, the Baptiſts, may, perhaps, ſtill inſiſt, that according to the beſt lexicographers and moſt approved maſters of the original language, this word ſignifies dipping or plunging only.

It may therefore be neceſſary for their ſakes, to pay ſome farther attention to this matter; though if all the Lexicons in the world ſhould confirm their appropriate meaning of the word, it ought to

have no weight with you contrary to the known uſe of it by divine inſpiration—However, for your better ſatisfaction, I have examined a number of lexicographers, and find, that all of them allow the word *baptizo*, to ſignify any kind of waſhing, or cleanſing with water. This matter I believe, will be clear beyond all doubt, to any one who will take the trouble to examine Heſychius, Budeus, Scapula, Stephanus, and Dr. Leigh's Critica Sacra. They are all acknowledged to be great maſters in the Greek language, and they allow the word to ſignify waſhing in general.

In their Lexicons and Commentaries, they ſay, *baptizo lavo*, which ſignifies, beyond all diſpute, waſhing in general—*baptiſma lavatio, ablutio*, waſhing, ablution, which we all know may be done, and is often well done, without plunging the body all under the water. It is of no force to ſay, that the word alſo ſignifies to waſh by dipping, or plunging; becauſe it then allows of other modes of baptizing beſides dipping.

This is granting all we contend for in the text, that our bleſſed Saviour did not command and fix any particular mode of waſhing with water in the ſacred inſtitution of baptiſm, and that he does not require dipping or plunging, any more than ſprinkling or pouring, but only baptiſm.

Some ſay, that the word *baptizo* is derived from *bapto*,* which all allow to ſignify dipping or plunging only, as the dyers do when they mean to tinge, or form a bright colour; and, therefore, it muſt have been the deſign of our Saviour to fix the mode of baptiſm by that word.—But this is nothing

* Even the word *bapto* does not always ſignify to dip or plunge. It is uſed in Dan. iv. 33, where it ſignifies to *wet* or *ſprinkle*.

to the purpoſe. If our Saviour deſigned to eſtabliſh the mode by the word, why did he not in the inſtitution of baptiſm, make uſe of *bapto* inſtead of *baptizo*, which would at once have carried the alluſion more ſtrongly, and forever fixed the mode of baptiſm to plunging only, as the Baptiſts would have it ?—It is more than probable that the word *baptizo* was uſed by our Saviour, and not *bapto*; becauſe it carried the beautiful alluſion of the other, but left his church at liberty to uſe the various modes of adminiſtering the holy ordinance according to the different climes and ſeaſons—according to the different circumſtances and neceſſities—and according to the various infirmities of his dear people.

It was his maxim, " I will have mercy and not ſacrifice."—But not to weary you with theſe remarks, we ſhall return to the law and teſtimony—I imagine you ſee that the mode of dipping as the only true baptiſm, is not enjoined by our Saviour in the words of the inſtitution, where we ſhould moſt certainly have found it, had it been his deſign—let us examine ſcripture example reſpecting the mode of baptiſm. There we have a right to expect ſome poſitive proof, that dipping is the only mode, eſpecially ſince it is not poſitively and expreſsly enjoined in the words of the inſtitution. But if all the examples of baptiſm we have recorded, were moſt evidently performed by plunging, it would no more than prove that plunging is one ſcriptural mode, or at leaſt it would not alone prove, that it is indiſpenſably neceſſary to baptiſm. The baptiſm of our bleſſed Saviour, by John, in Jordan, claims our firſt attention. Matt. iii. 16, " And Jeſus when he was baptized, went ſtraightway out of

the water."—This may be true hiſtory, though he were not baptized by plunging. His coming up out of the water may have no reſpect at all to the mode of baptiſm; for it was manifeſtly after he was baptized. Here we might moſt ſurely have expected it to have been eſtabliſhed, were any one of the modes of baptizing to be the only true baptiſm. But we are ſtill left without any thing certain to determine, whether our bleſſed Saviour himſelf was baptized by ſprinkling, pouring, plunging, or ſome other way.—Mark alſo ſays, "Jeſus was baptized of John, in Jordan;" but reſpecting the mode, he is wholly ſilent.—He might have been baptized by either mode, eſpecially as there was water enough for dipping.—The fact that Jeſus came up out of the water after he was baptized, cannot with any certainty prove, that he had been plunged all under the water upon that ſolemn occaſion.

The next example is John's baptizing at Enon, John, iii. 23, "And John was alſo baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, becauſe there was much water there; and they came and were baptized." This does not even prove that John baptized by plunging, much leſs that dipping is the only mode of baptiſm. Where there were ſuch multitudes of people as reſorted to John, much water muſt have been neceſſary for their uſe, had he baptized by pouring or ſprinkling.

John, notwithſtanding all that appears to the contrary from the ſacred hiſtory, might have uſed all the modes on different ſubjects, according to their ſex, age, and circumſtance. On the day of Pentecoſt, when there were three thouſand added to the church in one day, is it not very improbable

that any of them, since it is incredible that all of them, were baptized by plunging? The baptism of the Eunuch is another example recorded in scripture—we have a particular history of this in the 8th chapter of the Acts of the apostles—"and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." This is a very particular description of the solemn transaction upon which the Baptists must insist, as a clear and positive proof, that plunging is the only scripture baptism.

But I hope, in a few words to shew, that this is so far from proving, that dipping is the only scripture baptism, that there is not any certain proof whether the Eunuch himself was baptized by plunging, pouring, or sprinkling. Here let it be noticed, that the Greek prepositon *eis*, does not always signify, into, as it is here translated, but is often translated, *to or unto*—and *ek* translated, out of, very frequently signifies, *from any thing*. Agreeable to this, the passage may be thus read—"And they went down both to the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him; and when they were come up from the water," &c.*

I may now appeal to any impartial mind, that if

* Some suppose that the *mode* of baptism is clearly ascertained, by its being said of Christ and others, that at the time of their baptism they went down into the water, and came up out of the water. If such will turn to the history of Israel's transit over Jordan, they will find it repeatedly asserted that they went down into Jordan, (the same river in which Christ was baptized,) and came up out of Jordan, and wet the soles of their feet only. If Israel went down into Jordan, and came up out of Jordan, and were not plunged all over in Jordan, as it is certain they were not, then Christ's going into Jordan, and coming up out of Jordan, furnishes no evidence that he was baptized by plunging.

any one ſhould read this hiſtory, who has heard of baptizing only by pouring water upon the perſon baptized, whether he will not immediately ſay the Eunuch was baptized in that way; and whether he who has never ſeen the ordinance adminiſtered only by ſprinkling of clean water, will not as certainly conclude, that Philip baptized him by that mode?—But could this poſſibly be the caſe, if there were in the text any clear and certain proof in favor of plunging? We will now conſider the paſſage more critically—"and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch." The going down into the water could not be the baptiſm here recorded; becauſe Philip muſt then alſo have been baptized, ſince they both went down into the water. But the plain fact is, that the going down into the water, is no part of the baptiſm here, but a diſtinct thing—"And he baptized him." This ſentence contains the baptiſm, and all that is certain about the mode in which it was adminiſtered. After the Eunuch was baptized, it is ſaid, "they both came up out of the water." Does this prove that the Eunuch was plunged? and why not Philip? Since he alſo came up out of the water. Should it be granted that the Eunuch was dipped, which is by no means certain, it will not eſtabliſh dipping as the only ſcriptural mode of baptiſm. Neither will it prove, that it is eſſential to the right adminiſtration of the ordinance, eſpecially as it is not made neceſſary by him, who is the acknowledged author of the ſacred inſtitution.

Let us now conſider thoſe particular paſſages of ſacred ſcripture, which are brought to prove that plunging is the only true mode of ſcripture baptiſm—The firſt I ſhall take notice of is in Coloſſians,

ii. 12, and the parallel text in Romans, vi. 4, "Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein ye alſo are riſen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead. Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt, was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life." It is very clear that the deſign of inſpiration in theſe words, was not to eſtabliſh any particular mode of baptiſm. It was to ſhew, that all thoſe to whom he addreſſed himſelf, who were truly baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, had really the internal change ſignified by baptiſm. They were baptized into his death, as the apoſtle expreſſes it. They were really dead, and buried with Chriſt as to ſin, and with him were riſen again; and they alſo were really alive unto God, and could not deſire to live any longer in ſin.

This is true with reſpect to all thoſe who have this internal ſpiritual change, by the waſhing of regeneration, and ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt ſignified by baptiſm; though they were baptized only by ſprinkling. They are truly and ſpiritually baptized into his death—They "are buried with him by their baptiſm into death;" and they alſo "are truly riſen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed Chriſt from the dead."

Let us not, my hearers, be too ſtrenuous, but candid and generous to our brethren, who ſeem to be a little ſtraitened on this ſubject. Let us allow, that the apoſtle has reference to the external mode of baptiſm. It will then prove that plunging is an allowed mode—But grant that it was an approved mode; grant that it was a mode of baptiſm prac-

tiſed in thoſe warmer climes ; and, ſtill farther, grant that it was the only mode practiſed by the apoſtles, even then it will not by any means follow, that plunging is the only chriſtian baptiſm. It is not expreſsly commanded, and excluſively enjoined by our Lord and Maſter, in the original inſtitution ; neither any where elſe in the ſacred ſcriptures, is it intimated to be his will.

Some, to prove dipping to be the only baptiſm, have made uſe of 1 Cor. x. 2. "And were all baptiſed unto Moſes, in the cloud, and in the ſea." But it is probable, that they who imagine it to the purpoſe, are ſtill where our fathers were, under a cloud, and have not yet paſſed through the ſea. Should any think it refers to the mode of chriſtian baptiſm, I ſhall only obſerve, that the ſpray of the waters on the right and left, and the miſt of the cloud above, as they paſſed through the ſea, gently ſprinkling them, do as aptly repreſent, to an impartial mind, the mode of ſprinkling. But the apoſtle, Eph. iv. 5, ſays, "One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm." It is true that we acknowledge but one baptiſm by water, even *that* inſtituted by our bleſſed Lord in our text ; but ſtill there may be different ways of applying the water in the ſacred waſhing, ſuch as may anſwer a good conſcience, and may moſt aptly repreſent the manner of his death with Chriſt, as to ſin, and his riſing again to ſpiritual life. The three modes uſed in the proteſtant church, taken together, may moſt fitly repreſent the out pouring of that all powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, by which the command comes home to the guilty ſoul : by which ſin revives, and the ſinner is overwhelmed in death. They may alſo repreſent that ſpiritual waſhing of regeneration

and ſprinkling of the precious blood of Chriſt, by which the ſoul is cleanſed from ſin and guilt, and riſes with Chriſt to a new ſpiritual life and comfort, through faith, which is of the operation of God.

On the whole, it at leaſt is evident, that our brethren the Baptiſts ought to be a little leſs poſitive on this ſubject, and more modeſt and charitable toward thoſe who differ from them in that reſpect. They hold that without dipping or plunging the body all under the water, there is no chriſtian baptiſm; eſteeming themſelves, from this principle, the only chriſtian church in the world: they will hold no chriſtian communion with any of the proteſtant churches.

The Epiſcopal church adminiſters baptiſm by pouring, and thoſe of their communion uſe that mode. We think the mode of ſprinkling as ſcriptural as pouring or plunging; but yet we can uſe either mode as may beſt anſwer a good conſcience to him who is baptized.

The mode of baptizing, by ſprinkling clean water, we think was holden forth by the Jewiſh types, and clearly foretold of the chriſtian church in Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, "Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you.—A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you a heart of fleſh." It is expreſsly promiſed to Chriſt, in Iſa. lii. 15, "So ſhall he ſprinkle many nations; the kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them ſhall they ſee; and that which they had not heard, ſhall

they conſider." This mode of baptiſm is very expreſſive of our being waſhed and cleanſed from our ſins, filth, and pollution, by the precious blood of Chriſt, which is, therefore, called the blood of ſprinkling. Heb. xii. 22—24. "But ye are come unto Mount Zion—and to Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel."—1 Pet. i. 2. "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt."

Upon the whole, it is clear to me, beyond a doubt, and I ſeriouſly think it will alſo appear to every impartial mind, that it was not the deſign of Chriſt to confine his church in the adminiſtration of baptiſm, to either of the modes which have been mentioned. He, therefore, has given ſufficient light in his word, to countenance the uſe of either mode, as the circumſtances and neceſſities of his people may require. To aſcertain the proper ſubjects of this ordinance, is a matter of much greater importance. I ſhall, therefore, proceed upon that ſubject, after making a few remarks.

1. Our brethren are moſt certainly wrong and ſchiſmatical, in rejecting all other chriſtian churches, on account of their difference in the mode of adminiſtering baptiſm. They have no ſufficient warrant to make dipping or plunging eſſential to the very being of baptiſm.—We do not doubt that many of them think they are right; but it is very clear to me, that ſuch have never thoroughly and impartially examined the ſacred ſcriptures, or have not yet learned what that meaneth, "I will have mercy and not ſacrifice."

2. We may, and ought to own those ministers and churches which Christ Jesus owns, and blesses with his graces, presence and influence in the administration of his word and ordinances, agreeably to his precious promise in the text.—We believe he thus owns some of the Baptist churches and ministers; and, if we make the comparison, we trust some of our ministers and churches are nothing behind them. Should we not then bless God together, and love one another as brethren? Who objects to this? Let him answer it to our Lord and master. But rather let him now, in love, receive the light and truth as it is in Jesus—let him learn to be less bitter and censorious—let him be more modest and charitable towards the church of Christ, and let him not make a schism where Christ makes no difference.

3. It is of great importance as matters now stand, that we all should critically and impartially examine the sacred scriptures on this point. Important for us that we may know and have our minds established in the truth; and be able to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." Important for the Baptists, that they may be less zealous in matters non-essential; but more zealous in the things that make for the peace, and the edifying of the body of Christ in love; lest some of them suffer loss when they shall be saved so as by fire, and others stand reproved in the great day of the Lord.

SERMON II.

THE QUALIFICATIONS IN ADULTS FOR ADMISSION TO BAPTISM.

ACTS, VIII. 37.

AND PHILIP SAID, IF THOU BELIEVEST WITH ALL THINE HEART, THOU MAYEST.

THIS was the answer given by Philip, an eminent preacher of the gospel, to the Ethiopian Eunuch's request to be baptized. "See," said the Eunuch, "here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip replied, "if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."—The Ethiopian answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Upon this profession he was baptized.

There are two questions about the proper subjects of baptism. One respects adult persons—the other infants. Our text has immediate reference only to the former, and is a proper answer to that question.

We ſhall, therefore, now proceed to conſider, who, among the adults to whom the goſpel is preached, are to be baptized, or what qualifications in ſuch are neceſſary to baptiſm. Let it here be well remembered, that as the ſacred ſcriptures are the rule, we muſt neither increaſe, nor diminiſh the qualifications therein preſcribed.—I ſhall, therefore, call your attention,

I. To the ſacred ſcriptures on this ſubject.—And then proceed,

II. To prove the neceſſary qualifications for adult baptiſm, from the nature, uſe, and deſign of the ſacred inſtitution.

The enquiry now before us is, who among the adults, that live under the light of the goſpel, and are capable of hearing and underſtanding its ſolemn and intereſting report, are to be baptized?—The obſervations which ſhall be made in this diſcourſe, are to be underſtood with reference only to theſe. The other queſtion, reſpecting infants, muſt be diſtinctly conſidered in another place.

On this ſubject, my brethren, we have the Bible open before us; but the text claims our firſt attention, becauſe of its place at the head of this diſcourſe; "If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt" be baptized. This text muſt be allowed to import, that if thou doſt not believe with all thy heart, thou muſt not be baptized—I may not baptize thee. It is evident that Philip here intended two things by his anſwer. 1. To refer the Eunuch to his own conſcience before God. 2. To obtain ſome credible evidence of the true ſtate of his mind. The firſt being clear, the Eunuch readily and ſolemnly anſwers the ſecond in the following emphatical words—*I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is*

the Son of God. What kind of faith is here required by the Evangeliſt, is the only queſtion that remains to determine the ſenſe of the text; for it muſt be ſuppoſed, that the Eunuch profeſſed the ſame faith which Philip required. Some imagine it to be only what is called an hiſtorical faith—a common bare aſſent of the underſtanding to the hiſtory of the goſpel—ſuch as thoſe commonly have who are educated under its light. But how this can be called believing with all the heart, can hardly be conceived, ſince the very definition wholly excludes the heart.

Others ſuppoſe it is the faith that, in ſome meaſure realizes to the mind the ſolemnity and importance of the facts holden up to view in the goſpel, which muſt greatly affect the ſoul, and make the ſinner tremble; but does not imply any change of heart, or real conformity of it to the things believed.—But how can this be a believing with all the heart, which is, according to the ſuppoſition, a believing againſt the heart!—Thus the apoſtle ſays, "The devils believe and tremble." But let the ſcripture explain itſelf, and we ſhall not here be at a loſs. Rom. x. 9, 10. "That if you ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation." To believe in the heart, and with the heart, is a ſaving faith in ſcripture-language; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs." It is alſo obſervable, that the true confeſſion with the mouth flows from a believing heart; for thus confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.

It is evident, that in order to baptiſm, the Evangeliſt required ſaving faith in Chriſt, and that of one alſo who was not a heathen. It ſeems, hence, clearly to follow, that of thoſe to whom the goſpel is preached, no one is to be baptized but the believer, and he only upon giving credible evidence of his ſaving faith in Chriſt Jeſus. This agrees with the moſt obvious ſenſe of the commiſſion, Matth. xxviii. 19. Mark, xvi. 15, 16. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned."

It accords with the doctrine Chriſt taught long before, ſee John, iii. 5. "Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot ſee the kingdom of God. Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

It alſo ſeems to have been the uniform practice of all the apoſtles, according to the inſpired records of their conduct. Acts, ii. 38—41. "Then Peter ſaid unto them, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the ſame day there were added unto them about three thouſand ſouls."

True repentance neceſſarily implies a change of heart; therefore to give up ourſelves to be baptized in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, as called upon

in the text, pre-ſuppoſes a ſaving faith.—It pre-ſuppoſes that faith, which is connected with the forgiveneſs of ſins. But to clearly determine the matter, it is added in the 41ſt verſe, "then they that gladly received the word," which is the ſame as believing with all the heart, "were baptized." Here it is manifeſt that the apoſtles baptized none of the many thouſands, who heard them preach on that ſolemn occaſion, but thoſe who appeared cordially to embrace the goſpel, Acts, viii. 12, 13. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himſelf believed alſo," &c. Simon was baptized only on the ſuppoſition of ſaving faith, and was rejected immediately when it appeared, that he was in the gall of bitterneſs, and bonds of iniquity. I find no example in this ſacred hiſtory, of adult perſons, who were baptized, but what confirms the ſame thing.*

Upon the whole, it is very evident, that though the apoſtles preached the goſpel to every creature, to Jews and Gentiles, yet they baptized no adult perſons, unleſs they made a profeſſion of real religion, and gave credible evidence of ſaving faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thus it appears from ſcripture, that nothing ſhort of true and ſaving faith renders an adult perſon a proper ſubject of chriſtian baptiſm.—I ſhall now proceed,

II. To argue the neceſſary qualifications for adult baptiſm, from the nature, uſe, and deſign of the ſacred inſtitution.

Under this head I ſhall endeavor to ſhew, from

* See the inſtance of Lydia and the Jailer—Acts, xvi. 15—34.

a variety of conſiderations, that faith in Chriſt, and nothing ſhort of it, qualifies an adult perſon for baptiſm.

This will appear, *firſt*, from the uſe of baptiſm as an initiating ordinance into the church. Our bleſſed Saviour, ſpeaking of adult perſons, ſays, John, iii. 3. "Except a man be born again he cannot ſee the kingdom of God." In the 5th verſe—"Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And in John, xviii. 36. "Jeſus anſwered, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." The apoſtle alſo aſſerts, Titus, ii. 14, "That Chriſt gave himſelf to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

If the church of Chriſt is to conſiſt of a peculiar people, ſeparated from the world—if a man muſt be born of the Spirit to enter into this kingdom, it muſt follow that baptiſm, which introduces an adult perſon into the viſible church, as a qualified member, ought not to be adminiſtered to any of theſe but upon credible evidence, that they are thus qualified. This is exactly agreeable to the anſwer of our queſtion, in the Shorter Catechiſm, which ſays, "That baptiſm is not to be adminiſtered to any who are out of the viſible church, until they profeſs their faith in Chriſt, and obedience to him."

2. From the deſign of baptiſm, as a ſeal of the covenant of promiſe, both on God's, and on our part. In this covenant are promiſes to the church in general, and to the believer in particular, for

himſelf and his children, as I ſhall ſhew on another occaſion. But nothing ſhort of faith in Chriſt brings an adult perſon into this covenant, and entitles him to the promiſes. The promiſes are yea and amen, only in Chriſt Jeſus, agreeably to 2 Cor. i. 20. Since it is by faith only that a perſon, who acts for himſelf, or who, according to the gracious conſtitution, acts for others, agrees to the covenant, or takes hold of the promiſe, it is a great abſurdity to adminiſter baptiſm, which is a ſeal of the covenant to any adult unbeliever. Faith, therefore, in Chriſt, or an hearty agreement to the covenant on our part is abſolutely neceſſary to baptiſm.

3. Adult baptiſm is a public ſolemn profeſſion, that we do forſake our ſins, that we renounce our idols, and give ourſelves and ours to God through Jeſus Chriſt. But no perſon actually does this except he has faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Philip, therefore, ſaid, "If thou believeſt with all thine heart thou mayeſt" be baptized. Conſequently true faith is a neceſſary qualification in adult baptiſm. But to ſum up the whole, and bring it before you in one view—If adult baptiſm ſignifies any thing ſpiritual on the part of the baptized, if it ſeals to him any promiſe for himſelf, or for his children, it muſt ſuppoſe real faith. For example: the waſhing away of our ſins by the blood of Chriſt muſt certainly ſuppoſe faith in Chriſt, or elſe it ſignifies that which is not true. If it ſeals to adults the promiſed bleſſings of the new covenant for themſelves, or for their children, it is only through Chriſt, and neceſſarily ſuppoſes faith. In whatever light we conſider the ſubject, ſaving faith appears to be a qualification eſſentially neceſſary for adult baptiſm. All the inſtances of adult baptiſm, we have record-

ed in the facred ſcriptures, are full on this point. They clearly ſhew, that the apoſtles, and primitive diſciples of Chriſt did not baptize any to whom they preached the goſpel, on the ſuppoſition of a mere hiſtorical faith, or becauſe they were only ſeriouſly affected. Felix trembled, but was not baptized. And, no doubt, many others trembled under the powerful preaching of the apoſtles on the day of Pentecoſt; but we do not read that any of them were baptized, except thoſe who gladly received the word. When the apoſtles went out to the Gentiles, they preached the goſpel to vaſt multitudes; but we do not find that they baptized any adults, either men or women, except thoſe who made a credible profeſſion of their faith in Chriſt.

We have ſufficient light, therefore, whether we look directly to the ſcriptures, or reaſon on the nature, uſe, and deſign of this inſtitution, to ſhew us that faith is an eſſential pre-requiſite to adult baptiſm; or that this ordinance muſt not be adminiſtered to any but through the qualifying influence of this grace. The reaſon is obvious. All the promiſed bleſſings of the covenant of grace are treaſured in Chriſt for his church and people, and flow out to them only through faith. This alone unites us to him, and gives us a gracious title to the privileges and bleſſings granted to believers, either for themſelves or their children. The apoſtle addreſſed the multitude on the day of Pentecoſt, exactly in this connexion.

Preſſing on them the call to repentance, faith, and baptiſm, by this very argument, he ſaid, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins—

For the promiſe is to you, and to your children." It is plain, that there is neither force nor propriety in this, unleſs repentance and faith were neceſſary to baptiſm, and to the enjoyment of the bleſſings and privileges of the goſpel church.

That which qualifies an adult perſon for baptiſm, gives him, through this ordinance, an equal right to enjoy all the privileges and bleſſings of the free citizens of Zion. But nothing ſhort of faith in Chriſt can give an adult perſon, before God, and nothing ſhort of a credible profeſſion of it can, in the view of the church, give him a right to the enjoyment of all theſe bleſſings and privileges. Faith in Chriſt, therefore, muſt be conſidered as an eſſential qualification for adult baptiſm—And, upon the ſtricteſt examination, this will be found to be agreeable to the practice of the church in pureſt times. It alſo has been the ſentiment and practice of the moſt pious and ſucceſsful miniſters of Chriſt in every age of the church—and it agrees with the confeſſion of the faith of our church, and I believe of all the beſt reformed churches in the world. This diſcourſe ſhall now be cloſed with a few remarks.

1. Baptiſm is a ſolemn inſtitution. It is undoubtedly of equal authority and ſolemnity with the holy ordinance, the Lord's ſupper. Some ſeem to have looſe ideas of baptiſm, and of the qualifications neceſſary for its proper ſubjects, who, at the ſame time, are very ſuperſtitious reſpecting the holy ſupper. But, according to ſcripture, they are both on the ſame foundation—both equally ſolemn and ſacred. They have one author. They are ſeals of the ſame covenant; and they are both ſacraments of the new teſtament, and require the

ſame qualifications in adult perſons—in both we have to deal with a heart-ſearching God; and we are to give up ourſelves in covenant to him, through Jeſus Chriſt, to be his for ever.—The ſin of coming unqualified to both, is equally heinous—the profanation of either is equally dangerous.—He who comes properly qualified to baptiſm, ought to bleſs God, and come cheerfully to the Lord's ſupper.

2. The true church is founded on the rock Chriſt Jeſus. Since baptiſm is the initiating ordinance into the church, faith in Chriſt is neceſſary to baptiſm in adult perſons. A credible profeſſion of this faith is the ground upon which baptiſm is to be adminiſtered to any adult perſon. Accordingly we find that when Peter profeſſed his faith in Chriſt, our bleſſed Saviour anſwered, (Matt. xvi. 18.) "And I ſay alſo unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it." There may be other churches, and indeed thoſe muſt be other churches, who are not built on this foundation, and make not any, or a different profeſſion.—They may be numerous and flouriſhing; but they certainly will be entirely conſumed when every man's work ſhall be tried by fire.

3. The church of Chriſt ought to hold the ordinance of baptiſm, very dear and ſacred. This not only ſignifies and ſeals to believers the ineſtimable bleſſings and privileges of the new covenant, but is the ordinance of admiſſion into the church. Oh! how careful ſhould the miniſters and churches of Chriſt be in their conduct, leſt this ſacred ordinance be profaned! They ſhould always be vigilant, leſt any ſhould proſtitute it to purpoſes for-

eign to the ſacred deſign of its inſtitution. The world ſhould know that miniſters have no right, but from Chriſt, to adminiſter baptiſm to any. Every one ought to know, that it is not a matter of favor with them, which they may beſtow at pleaſure, but at their peril. The word of God is their rule: and we all know, or ought to know, that when this ſacred inſtitution is miſapplied and abuſed, it is always attended with ſome of the worſt conſequences, both to the church and to the ſouls of men.

4. They who deſpiſe and wilfully neglect this ordinance, cannot be chriſtians. Though we do not hold that baptiſm is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation; yet ſince it is a poſitive inſtitution of Chriſt, and enjoined on his church as a ſtanding ordinance, they who wilfully neglect it, they who deſpiſe it, are certainly chargeable with continued diſobedience to him, and muſt be conſidered as deſtitute of the diſtinguiſhing qualifications of chriſtians.

5. All thoſe who are baptized are under moſt ſolemn obligations to live holy lives—they are given up to God—they are ſet apart for him—they ought to give up themſelves wholly to God and his ſervice, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in all manner of converſation. For them now to live in ſin, and to purſue the ways of the wicked, is to deny their baptiſm; is to diſown the God of their fathers, and to load their ſouls with aggravated guilt. Be perſuaded then, all you of this character, to renounce your tranſgreſſions, ſpare your own ſouls, and give glory to God through Jeſus Chriſt. Some of you have ſolemnly acknowledged theſe obligations before God and his

people; and have ſealed the covenant at the Lord's table: you ought, therefore, to love and ſerve him, whom you have thus acknowledged to be your God and Saviour. Conſider, oh! conſider how aggravated your ſins muſt be againſt ſuch ſolemn ties! Can you think any obligations ſo ſacred, ſo ſolemn, ſo often confirmed, as thoſe which you are under, to forſake all the ways of ſin, to live to God, and to ſerve him with your whole ſoul?

SERMON III.

INFANT BAPTISM.

GAL. III. 29.

AND IF YE BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.

RESPECTING the eternal council of God the Father, and the design of his grace towards our lost world, we are informed, John, iii. 16, That "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

To complete this glorious work of salvation; to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people; to destroy Satan's kingdom, and to bring glory to God in the salvation of sinners—Jesus Christ was appointed Mediator of the New-Covenant. It pleased God, soon after the fall of man, to reveal this gracious design, and set up his church and kingdom on earth, which he has supported in every age of the world. To the members of this kingdom, God has, at different times, promised certain blessings, and granted cer-

tain privileges gradually displaying the riches of his grace and goodness, in a variety of successive dispensations. The first gracious intimation is recorded, Gen. iii. 15, where it is promised, that "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." It pleased God more fully to reveal this glorious design to Abraham. With him he established a gracious covenant; a covenant which contained certain promises. To him he also granted certain blessings and privileges, both for his natural and spiritual seed, (Gen. xvii. 7.) Upon this I shall hereafter have occasion to speak more fully. —God thus constituted him the Father of the Faithful. He thus established his covenant, that they should not only pattern his faith, but that all his spiritual seed or children should also inherit the spiritual blessings and privileges of the covenant of promise. This the apostle, more than once or twice, expressly asserts in our context. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. For ye are all the children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus."* Then he sums up the whole in our text. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." That the promise here mentioned, contained spiritual blessings and privileges; that God

* Verses, 7, 8, 9, 14, 26.

granted these to Abraham as the Father of the Faithful; that it was one of those blessings contained in this covenant of promise, that infants were to be received with their parents into the church, and have the seal of the righteousness of faith administered to them—that this blessing, or privilege of Abraham, is now come upon the Gentiles, through faith in Christ, as is asserted in the 14th verse—and that all who are Christ's, are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise as expressed in our text, seem to be incontestible truths. The doctrine inferred from the words of our text, in this connexion, as the subject of the ensuing discourse, is,

That believers under the gospel dispensation have a right to baptism for their infant children, or that the infants of such are to be baptized.

To illustrate and establish this doctrine, it is proposed by divine assistance to shew,

I. That God did graciously grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents.

II. That God commanded, that the seal of the righteousness of faith should be administered unto them.

III. That this great privilege is, under the gospel, confirmed and continued to believers. Or that the infant children of believers are to be baptized.

I. I am to show, That God did graciously grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents.

That the truth of this may clearly appear, ſeveral things command particular attention.

1. At a time when religion was very low in the world, and when the viſible church was almoſt extinct, God called Abraham out from the wicked world, in order to ſet up his church and kingdom in his family.*

2. When God had tried and proved Abraham's faith and obedience,† he eſtabliſhed his covenant with him as an everlaſting covenant, and ſet up his church in Abraham's houſe.‡ Here we ſee certain commands enjoined on Abraham; certain inſtitutions for him to obſerve, and certain bleſſings and privileges granted to him for himſelf, and for his ſeed. Theſe bleſſings were to continue in the church, and to deſcend to his children through ſucceeding ages. This was an everlaſting covenant. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy ſeed after thee."

3. Let it be ſtrictly obſerved, that the ſpiritual bleſſings contained in this covenant, were granted to Abraham as a father to the faithful. They are ſummed up in theſe emphatical words; "I will be a God to thee, and to thy ſeed after thee." The Jews themſelves underſtood it in this view, but confined the bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, to Abraham's natural ſeed through the law. This groſs miſtake the apoſtle corrects, in the chapter containing our text, by clearly ſhewing, that they were deſigned for his ſpiritual ſeed alſo, through the goſpel, whether Jews or Gentiles. The true ſtate of the matter was this—The viſible church at that time was almoſt ſwallowed up in a deluge of

* Gen. Chap. 12. † Chap. 15, 16. ‡ Chap. 17.

idolatry, and wickedneſs—but God was pleaſed to call forth Abraham, and begin a new diſpenſation of grace to his church. To diſplay more fully his glorious deſign, he gave richer promiſes, and granted more ample privileges.

This was to be an everlaſting covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. "And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations, for an everlaſting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy ſeed after thee."

4. In this diſpenſation of his grace to his church, he expreſsly granted unto Abraham this great privilege, that infants ſhould be received into the viſible church with their parents; and he ordered that the ſign of the covenant ſhould be adminiſtered to every male child at eight days old. The ſame day, in obedience to the divine command, was Abraham circumciſed, and his ſon Iſhmael.*

Here, my brethren, was ſomething new and glorious—Abraham, through this covenant, no doubt, ſaw Chriſt, the glorious head of all his ſpiritual ſeed, and was glad, as our bleſſed Saviour obſerves.†

Under this diſpenſation you ſee that God appointed and commanded, that infants ſhould be received into the church with their parents. Infants, by circumciſion as an initiating ordinance, were admitted into the church. Thus the apoſtle ſays, Acts, vii. 8. "And he gave him the covenant of circumciſion. And ſo Abraham begat Iſaac, and circumciſed him the eighth day," &c.

It is very evident that the church once poſſeſſed this ineſtimable privilege of giving up their children to God in the covenant of promiſe; and it is

* Geneſis, xvii. † John, viii. 56.

as evident that by the ſpecial command of God, the faithful, in the only true church, enjoyed the ſame through ſucceeding ages. They alſo had many precious promiſes for their children recorded in the ſacred oracles, all which are yea and amen in Chriſt Jeſus to believers.—Of this I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more freely in another place.

II. I propoſe to ſhew, that God did command, that the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith ſhould be adminiſtered to infants. To prevent a difficulty from ariſing in your minds, I would here obſerve, that no ſign nor ſeal, which is wholly legal, and reſpects only temporal bleſſings, can, with any propriety, be called a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith. Thoſe who believe the ſacred ſcriptures, cannot doubt, that God commanded circumciſion to be adminiſtered to infants of eight days old.*

It is commanded, that not only Abraham muſt circumciſe his own children, but it is expreſsly commanded, that his ſeed after him muſt be circumciſed in their generations. So ſtrict was the command, that every uncircumciſed male child was ordered to be cut off from God's people, becauſe he had broken the covenant. Some, perhaps, may ſay, that this is nothing to the purpoſe, for circumciſion was a carnal, legal, bloody ordinance. They may ſay, that it was a covenant of works, and could have no reſpect to Chriſtian baptiſm. As for ſuch, let them take heed leſt they be found to oppoſe the apoſtle, and contradict the ſpirit of inſpiration. But, my hearers, let your minds be calm and attentive. Circumciſion was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith. The very ſame circumciſion which

* Geneſis, vii. 10—12—14.

God appointed, and commanded to be adminiſtered to infants, who were, by it, admitted into the covenant of promiſe with their parents, was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith.—Faith is not of works, but of grace.

Whatever ends circumciſion might be ſuppoſed to anſwer in this, or the ſucceeding diſpenſation, yet it was here a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of that faith, by which a believer is juſtified and ſaved. The apoſtle Paul referring expreſsly to this command of circumciſion, and ſpeaking of the bleſſedneſs of thoſe whoſe ſins are forgiven, ſays, Rōmans, iv. 9, 10, 11, 12. "Cometh this bleſſedneſs then upon the circumciſion only, or upon the uncircumciſion alſo? for we ſay that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs.—How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumciſion, or in uncircumciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion.—And he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumciſed: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed, that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo:—and the father of circumciſion to them who are not of the circumciſion only, but who alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumciſed."

Having proved to you that circumciſion was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, and having proved, that God himſelf commanded it to be adminiſtered to infants as a ſtanding ordinance in his church, under the Abrahamic and Moſaic diſpenſations of the covenant of promiſe, it, therefore, muſt be evident to every impartial mind, that the true church

once had this grant from heaven, and that the members of the visible church did once, and for a long time enjoy this great, this interesting privilege. They did give up their infant offspring to God, and in token of this the seal of the righteousness of faith was administered to them.

These are the points which were to be established under the first and second heads of this discourse. But before I proceed to the next head, it may be necessary to answer some objections, which have been thrown in the way of the truth, and which may still be lurking in some of your minds.

It has been said, that the law given at Sinai disannulled this covenant with Abraham; that the law was four hundred and thirty years after this; and that, since it was an entire new dispensation, attended with many new ceremonies, it must have rendered the Abrahamic dispensation useless. In consequence of this remark, some have said, that all arguments drawn thence are of no weight, and tend only to confuse and deceive weak minds. All this is very plausible, indeed, and may have great weight with some; but it is easy to shew every candid mind that the assertion is false, and that the objection has no force.

1. Though it should be granted that the Abrahamic dispensation ceased, when succeeded by the Mosaic economy; yet it will by no means follow, that the covenant of promise was made void. Neither will it follow, that any of the blessings and privileges once granted to believers, were taken away. These may stand good, and promised blessings be more clearly holden up to view, and more liberally bestowed on the church, in a new way, by the succeeding dispensation, agreeably to

the gracious design of God, more fully to display his mercy.

2. It is certain, that circumcision, as a sign of the Abrahamic covenant, and as a seal of the righteousness of faith, was continued under the Jewish dispensation; that the privileges granted to the church were continued—that many of the blessings promised to Abraham, as the father of believers, were enjoyed by the Jewish church, and that God bestowed these blessings on that people, as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. It, therefore, must follow, that the Abrahamic covenant was not made void by the Jewish dispensation.

3. But what is more than all, we have the apostle's express declaration on this head—a declaration, which, when properly considered, must for ever silence all such objectors. Gal. iii. 17. "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." If the law, or Jewish dispensation, had made void this great promise, or privilege, it would now have been of none effect.—The blessings could not have come upon us Gentiles.

III. It is here proposed to shew, that the privilege once granted to Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents, is confirmed under the gospel, and is continued to believers. Here it would be easy to shew, that all the promises, blessings and privileges of the church, contained in every dispensation, in all their true spiritual meaning, are, under the gospel, confirmed and

continued to believers; but we are confined, by the narrow limits of our diſcourſe, to only one privilege. But let it be our preſent comfort, that this is not ſmall.

1. Every ſpiritual privilege once granted to the church by its great King and Head, remains in full force until repealed. This may be thus illuſtrated—God once granted unto Abraham, as a father in the church, the privilege of giving up himſelf in covenant. This remained in force under the Jewiſh diſpenſation to all his ſeed, and as it is not yet repealed, remains ſtill in force to all his ſpiritual children. This, I believe, will hold good with reſpect to all the ſpiritual bleſſings and privileges God has granted to his church in every age. Modes and ſhadows may be changed, but the ſubſtance ſtill remains. It has been proved, that God did grant and confirm unto his church the privilege that infants ſhould be received into the viſible church with their parents, and that the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith ſhould be given unto them. This, unleſs it has been repealed, moſt certainly remains as an inheritance for believers, which they may enjoy as members of the viſible church, and true children of Abraham. For to uſe the apoſtle's argument, believers are all one in Chriſt Jeſus, and if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.

If believers have now an undoubted right, by heirſhip, to all the privileges of the covenant of promiſe granted to Abraham, which are not repealed under the goſpel, we may boldly aſſert, that if this privilege is not now repealed, the command of God is now on all true believers to give

up their infants to him in covenant; and, as a token to this, ought to have adminiſtered to them that which is now the ſign of the covenant, and ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith.

But we believe, and confidently affirm, that all the ſpiritual bleſſings and privileges formerly granted to the church are now in full force.

We have particularly proved, that this privilege alſo was once granted, it, therefore, remains confirmed under the goſpel, and continued to believers. Thoſe who undertake to releaſe chriſtians from this command of God, and deny believers the ineſtimable pleaſure of giving up their dear infant offspring to God in covenant through Jeſus Chriſt, ought now ſolemnly to prove, that this privilege is made void by the goſpel. The burden of proof now lies upon our brethren, the Baptiſts. Here we ought alway to put the laboring oar into their hands, and then let them labor ſince they will undertake it. But, alas! their taſk here is as difficult as it is unthankful.—Our bleſſed Saviour charges us not to think that he came to "deſtroy the law and the prophets." (Matth. v. 17.) The apoſtle alſo aſſures us, that all the promiſes are yea and amen in Chriſt Jeſus, (2 Cor. i. 20.) Agreeably to this we may be aſſured that Chriſt came to be unto his dear people all that the law typified of him—to fulfil all that the prophets foretold of him, and to beſtow all the ſpiritual bleſſings promiſed in his word.

But let us calmly hear, and let us without prejudice examine what our brethren the Baptiſts ſay to prove that this privilege is repealed by the goſpel.

1. It is ſaid that this covenant belonged to the Jewiſh diſpenſation, which was wholly done away

by Chriſt, and that conſequently it is now of no force.

Anſ. 1. But though we allow that the Jewiſh diſpenſation is now wholly done away—though we alſo grant that this privilege belonged to it, yet it will not follow that this, or, indeed, any of the ſpiritual bleſſings and privileges are now repealed. We muſt here diſtinguiſh between a diſpenſation, and the bleſſings diſpenſed. The former is the way in which the latter are diſplayed and communicated. The Jewiſh diſpenſation was only the manner which God choſe, by various laws, types and ſhadows to diſplay and communicate the bleſſings of his covenant to the Jewiſh Church. It is eaſy to ſee, that one diſpenſation may entirely ceaſe and give place to another, and yet all the covenant bleſſings and privileges of the former may be continued, and, indeed, many more added and enjoyed under the latter. This, in fact, has been the caſe in the church through various ſucceſſive diſpenſations, as might very eaſily be ſhewn, were it neceſſary.

2. But we utterly deny that the covenant of promiſe containing the privilege for which we contend, ever belonged to the Jewiſh diſpenſation. We aſſert the reverſe, that the Moſaic diſpenſation belonged wholly to this, and was added four hundred and thirty years after, for ſpecial reaſons as the apoſtle ſays.* Since, therefore, the giving of the law did not diſannul the covenant of promiſe, the taking of it away, certainly could not deſtroy the privilege for which we contend. Neither could it make void the ſolemn command by which it was enjoined, nor hinder the bleſſing of Abraham, in this reſpect, from coming on the Gentiles. This is

* Gal. iii. 17, 18.

moſt evidently the true ſtate of the matter. When the Jewiſh diſpenſation was taken away, the covenant command and promiſe, with all the ſpiritual privileges and bleſſings, came under the goſpel diſpenſation confirmed to true believers, the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, the true heirs according to the promiſe. Thus it is eaſy to ſee, how the bleſſing of Abraham is now come on us Gentiles.

To this it is objected that the promiſe of the land of Canaan is done away. Though this objection is not ſo very evident in every reſpect; yet grant it, and then the heavenly Canaan remains to the church, which was the ſpiritual meaning of the original promiſe. That circumciſion is aboliſhed by the goſpel, is another objection. But notwithſtanding this, the ſpiritual bleſſings ſignified by circumciſion, remain under the goſpel; and Jeſus Chriſt fulfils it to his people by circumciſing their hearts. Chriſt, under the goſpel diſpenſation, has alſo inſtituted baptiſm, to be the ſign of the covenant, and the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith. This, therefore, is called by the apoſtle the circumciſion of Chriſt. Col. ii. 11, 12. "In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the circumciſion of Chriſt, buried with him in baptiſm," &c.

Baptiſm now remains under the goſpel an initiating ordinance into the church. It is now the ſign of the covenant of promiſe, and the true ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith. From this there is not the leaſt evidence that the command is repealed, and the granted privilege taken away; but, on the contrary, it clearly ſhews, that they are in full force on believers under the goſpel.

SERMON IV.

INFANT BAPTISM.

GAL. III. 29.

AND IF YE BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.

IN the preceding diſcourſe, this doctrine was inferred from the words of our text, viz.

That believers under the goſpel diſpenſation have a right to baptiſm for their infant offspring, or that the infants of ſuch are to be baptized.

In illuſtrating and eſtabliſhing this doctrine, we have ſhown,

That God did graciouſly grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants ſhould be received into the viſible church with their parents:

That God commanded, that the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith ſhould be adminiſtered to them:—And,

That this great privilege is confirmed and continued to believers under the goſpel; or that the infant children of believers are to be baptized.

On this laſt propoſition we remarked, that every ſpiritual privilege once granted to the church by its great King and Head, remains in full force until repealed. That this privilege is not repealed, and that the command of God is new on all true believers to give up their infant offspring to him in covenant, to receive the ſign of the covenant, and ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith.

We examined what the Baptiſts ſay, to prove that this privilege is repealed, by the goſpel, viz. that this covenant belonged to the Jewiſh diſpenſation which is done away by Chriſt.—This reaſoning we found to be inconcluſive—we called you to diſtinguiſh between a diſpenſation and the bleſſings diſpenſed—and ſhowed that the covenant of promiſe, containing the privilege for which we contend, never did belong to the Jewiſh diſpenſation, but that the latter was added four hundred and thirty years after, and when it was taken away, the covenant, command, and promiſe, with all their ſpiritual privileges and bleſſings, came under the goſpel confirmed to true believers. Thus the bleſſing of Abraham is now come on the Gentiles.

We proceed to remark, that though the Jewiſh diſpenſation be aboliſhed—though circumciſion be done away, yet the grant is not repealed—the privilege remains to believers—the command is in full force, and ſince baptiſm is the circumciſion of Chriſt, and a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, through the adminiſtration of this, the bleſſing of Abraham may now come upon the Gentiles. Some, to prove that this privilege is now repealed, and that infants are cut off from the church by the goſpel, bring Matth. iii. 8, 9. "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance: And think

not to ſay within yourſelves, we have Abraham to our father: for I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham." Upon this I would make the following obſervations.

1. The infants of believers are here either intended, or not intended. If infants are not ſpoken of in this place, it is nothing to the purpoſe, for which it is cited. But ſhould any ſay, that the infants of believers are here intended, and are by this cut off from the church as well as others, it will alſo as certainly follow, according to verſes 10—12. "That ſince they cannot bring forth fruit, they will alſo be hewn down, and caſt into unquenchable fire."

2. The truth is this, adult perſons only are intended by John in this addreſs. They are trees full grown, which muſt bring forth good fruit, or be excluded the church by the goſpel, and be hewn down, and caſt into unquenchable fire.—The Phariſees and Sadducees preſumed that they had a good right to baptiſm, merely becauſe they were the natural ſeed of Abraham. But John ſhewed them, that under the goſpel this would be of no avail to any adults, who do not bring forth good fruit. This implies what we contend for, that all who bring forth fruit meet for repentance, ſhould, under the goſpel, inherit the covenant-bleſſing of Father Abraham.

Others think that, what the apoſtle ſays, in his epiſtle to the Hebrews,* reſpecting God's making a new covenant and deſtroying the old, fully repeals the grant, command and promiſe for which

* Hebrews, viii. 7, 8, 9.

we contend. But it will be evident to any one, at leaſt to every impartial mind, who attentively reads this and the following chapter, that the apoſtle here refers only to the law given at Sinai, or the Jewiſh diſpenſation. This, we have proved, may be aboliſhed, and the privileges which God had before granted his church, with the command by which they were enforced, remain unaffected. Whatever, in the Jewiſh diſpenſation, was deſigned by the old covenant, which was taken away, it could not diſannul the covenant which was before confirmed in Chriſt, it could not ſo diſannul it, as to make void any of the ſpiritual privileges and bleſſings. For theſe were before confirmed in Chriſt to believers.—(Gal. iii. 17.)

It alſo appears from this whole epiſtle, that the apoſtle was laboring to convince the Jews, that God's deſign in the abolition of the Sinaic economy, containing many coſtly, carnal, and bloody ordinances, and a worldly ſanctuary, was to make way for the goſpel diſpenſation, a diſpenſation which, inſtead of contracting the bleſſings and privileges of his dear people, ſhould eſtabliſh them on a better foundation, with great additions, and ſhould increaſe their ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus. Here certainly can be nothing like a repeal of the grant made to Abraham. It is worthy of particular notice, that in giving a view of the new covenant, the apoſtle makes uſe of the ſame expreſſion which God uſed with Abraham. By this he doubtleſs intended to ſhew, that the privileges granted to Abraham are confirmed and continued to believers under the goſpel.

But if the Abrahamic bleſſing reſpecting infants is confirmed and continued to believers under the

goſpel, it is moſt certain that the command alſo comes clothed with all the weight of the vaſtly ſuperior light and grace which diſtinguiſh the goſpel diſpenſation. We may, with much greater propriety, inſiſt, that the Baptiſts ſhould point out a repeal of this command—that they ſhould point out an expreſs prohibition of infant-baptiſm in the New Teſtament, with much greater propriety, I ſay, than they can demand of us a new command for a privilege once granted to the church, a privilege always enjoyed before, and a privilege ſo clearly eſtabliſhed and continued to believers under the goſpel. We cannot, we dare not give up this privilege of believers without ſome expreſs warrant from God. An expreſs command from him is as neceſſary to nullify, as to eſtabliſh a poſitive inſtitution, to revoke as to grant a privilege to the church.—The Chriſtian church thus underſtood it, and both circumciſion and baptiſm were at firſt adminiſtered together even to the Gentiles, till circumciſion was expreſsly prohibited by inſpiration, and baptiſm alone eſtabliſhed in the church, as the ſign of the covenant, and ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith. But there is no prohibition of the privilege granted to the church, reſpecting their infant ſeed; it, therefore, remains to believers under the ſanction of the divine command, and is ſealed to them for their children in the ordinance of baptiſm. We have no neceſſity of a new command, ſince baptiſm is now the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of that faith by which we become the ſeed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promiſe. We might, with the greateſt propriety, reſt the controverſy here, for the Baptiſts cannot ſhew any prohibition of this privilege in the ſacred ſcriptures—believe

and be baptized reſpects adult perſons in the firſt inſtance, and their offspring through them, as is proved. If the grant is no where repealed, it is moſt certainly continued to believers under the goſpel diſpenſation. But in addition to this, we think it is eaſy to ſhew, that this privilege is confirmed to believers in many places in the New Teſtament. We have ſhewn from ſcripture, that God did grant this privilege unto Abraham as the father of believers, and that he did command that infants ſhould be received into the viſible church with their parents, and enjoined, that the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith be adminiſtered to them. When, therefore, we find the apoſtle declaring, that they who are of the faith are the children of Abraham,* that they are bleſſed with faithful Abraham,† that the bleſſing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt, (Gal. iii. 14.) and then declaring, in our text, that if ye be Chriſt's then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe; we muſt firmly believe that this Abrahamic privilege or bleſſing, as well as others, is confirmed to believers under the goſpel diſpenſation.

The apoſtle, in his epiſtle to the Romans, affirms very clearly, by a ſtriking ſimilitude, that the Gentile believers were to enjoy, at leaſt, the ſpiritual privileges and bleſſings granted to the Jewiſh church, Romans, xi. 16, 17. "For if the firſt fruit be holy, the lump is alſo holy: and if the root be holy, ſo are the branches.—And if ſome of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive

* Gal. iii. 7. † Verſe 9.

tree." For whether by the root is meant Jeſus Chriſt, or Abraham, and by the olive tree is underſtood the church, or the covenant, yet being grafted in by faith they partook of the root and fatneſs of the olive tree.—This cannot be underſtood of the enjoyment of any thing ſhort of the ſame ſpiritual privileges and bleſſings, of which the Jews were deprived. But the Jews once enjoyed this Abrahamic privilege reſpecting infants, and are now deprived of it by their unbelief. If Gentile believers, under the goſpel, are cut off from the privilege of having their infant offspring admitted with them into the viſible church by baptiſm, then though they partake of the root, yet are they cut off from the fatneſs of the olive tree—a conſequence which is both unnatural and abſurd. It is evidently contrary to the apoſtle's deſign; and it greatly weakens, if not wholly deſtroys the force of his reaſoning in this place. Our bleſſed Saviour very ſeverely reproved thoſe diſciples who forbad that little children ſhould be brought to him, that they might receive his bleſſing. On that occaſion, he gave them a command, which may be conſidered as binding upon all his diſciples. He replied, "ſuffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for, ſaid he, of ſuch is the kingdom of God:" Or, in other words, ſuch as are brought to me by faith for my bleſſing, belong to my church, or kingdom on earth. The order which immediately follows reſpecting the admiſſion of adult members into this kingdom, ſeems to favor this ſenſe of the words, (Mark, x. 14, 15.) This command alſo ſeems to be a plain confirmation of the former privilege granted to his people. Thus the apoſtle learned of Chriſt, and taught the

Corinthians, (1 Cor. vii. 14. and onward) that if either parent was a believer, the children were, by God's appointment, ſet apart for him, or conſecrated, as the word, tranſlated holy, often ſignifies in the ſacred oracles.

To bring the matter to a point—That the infant children of believers are to be baptized, is a neceſſary conſequence of the propoſitions which have been already eſtabliſhed. In whatever light we take them, either together or ſeparately, it will clearly follow, that the infant children of believers are to be baptized. God granted unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants ſhould be received into the viſible church with their parents; and he alſo commanded that the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith ſhould be adminiſtered unto them. But we have proved that this great privilege is, under the goſpel, confirmed and continued to believers, conſequently the infants of believers, under the goſpel, are to be received into the viſible church with their parents, and, by the command of God, muſt have the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith given to them, which is the chriſtian circumciſion or baptiſm.

1. God did grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants ſhould be received into the viſible church with their parents. All true believers, under the goſpel, are Abraham's ſeed, and as his children they are the true heirs, in Chriſt, of this privilege, therefore, by the divine appointment, their infant children muſt be received into the viſible church with them, and are to be circumciſed with the circumciſion of Chriſt; or, in other words, they muſt be baptized.

2. God commanded that the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith ſhould be adminiſtered to infants, who are received into the church with their parents. Circumciſion was once this ſeal in the church, but, under the goſpel, baptiſm is the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith; therefore, by divine appointment, baptiſm muſt be adminiſtered to thoſe infants, who are admitted into the church with their parents under the goſpel diſpenſation.

3. The great privilege, that infant children ſhould be received into the church with their parents, and have the ſign of the covenant, the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, adminiſtered to them, is, under the goſpel, confirmed and continued to believers. Hence it clearly follows, ſince baptiſm is the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, that when adult perſons, upon their repentance and faith, are admitted into the goſpel church, their infant children are to be received with them, and to be baptized. Thus the apoſtle Peter, on the day of Pentecoſt, in the application of that moſt ſucceſsful ſermon, applies the promiſe exactly to this purpoſe. He enforces on his affected audience the goſpel call to repentance, faith and chriſtian baptiſm, by this ineſtimable privilege. Acts, ii. 38, 39. "Then Peter ſaid unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call." It may not be improper here to take notice of ſome other paſſages of the ſacred ſcriptures, which may be conſidered as direct proofs of infant baptiſm. The commiſſion of our bleſſed Saviour on this

point, claims our firſt attention. Matt. xxviii. 19. Though it is brought by the Baptiſts as an objection; yet, properly conſidered, I think it is ſo far from being in their favor, that it will afford a convincing proof of our doctrine to any perſon free from prepoſſeſſions.

1. The apoſtles were commanded to go out into all the world. Till then they had been confined to the Jews, and both circumciſion and baptiſm were adminiſtered to thoſe who embraced the goſpel, and to their infants. There was not the leaſt hint antecedent to this, that infants were to be excluded, but much to the contrary, as has been ſhewn. The apoſtles themſelves did not know that it would be lawful for them to go out to the Gentiles; much leſs that infants, as the Baptiſts aſſert, were to be cut off from this privilege in the goſpel church. They were here commanded to teach all nations, and preach the goſpel to every creature. It is probable that even the Baptiſts do not imagine, that this immediately reſpects infants, as to the external teaching and preaching of the word, they being wholly incapable of this. But it certainly does ſome way reſpect them. The words are plain—The command is expreſs—Go teach all nations—Go preach the goſpel to every creature. Surely our Saviour, who ſo tenderly took the dear little ones into his gracious arms, who ſo affectionately bleſſed them, I ſay ſurely he did not forget them on this moſt intereſting occaſion—Surely he was not ignorant of the tender feelings—Surely he was not a ſtranger to the pious breathings of the parental heart of his dear people in ages past. On this occaſion, when the life of a thouſand poor Iſhmaelites was at ſtake, he had not forgotten the

burſt of Abraham's fatherly heart, "Oh, that Iſhmael might live before thee!" Gen. xvii. 18. Nor was the compaſſionate Saviour inſenſible to thoſe pious parental deſires of true believers towards their infant offspring through all future ages, much leſs can any ſuppoſe, that he excludes them from the race of intelligent creatures, to whom the apoſtles were to preach the goſpel. We muſt either deny that they are part of all nations—we muſt alſo either deny that they are rational creatures, or we muſt ſuppoſe that they are ſome how included in the apoſtle's miſſion.

2. The apoſtles are hereby commanded, to teach (*matheteuſate*) to diſciple all nations, and preach the goſpel to every creature. Since then it is certain, that the teaching and preaching of the goſpel does ſome way reſpect infants, I confeſs, upon the Baptiſt's plan, I am utterly at a loſs how to underſtand it, unleſs it be wholly to exclude them from chriſtian baptiſm, from the church, and from heaven; and either to ſtrike them out of exiſtence all together, or to plunge them headlong into eternal damnation. But if we underſtand the commiſſion in the plain and natural ſenſe, according to the circumſtances in which it was ſpoken, as an honeſt, pious Jew would take it, and as it is clear the apoſtles underſtood it, the whole matter is plain. The teaching and preaching of the goſpel, were to diſciple infants by baptiſm with their believing parents, as had been a common known cuſtom among the Jews, when they proſelyted a heathen to the true religion.

The commiſſion was expreſs—It was very eaſy to be underſtood by thoſe to whom it was given—ſince they were well acquainted with the command

by which infants were to be received into the church with their parents—ſince they knew this had always been the practice—and ſince they had never heard any thing to the contrary drop from the bleſſed lips of their divine maſter, but much in favor of ſuch little ones, was it poſſible for them to underſtand it in ſuch a manner, as to exclude the infants of believers from the church and from baptiſm?

Upon the whole, it is with me beyond all doubt that the apoſtles ſo underſtood their bleſſed maſter, as fully to warrant and oblige them to receive infants into the viſible church with their believing parents, and baptize them. Agreeably to this they practiſed, when it is ſaid that Lydia and her houſhold were baptized—when the jailer and all his were baptized, and when Paul baptized the houſe of Stephanus, &c. It thus continued, no doubt, through the apoſtolic age; and from the beſt account we have in hiſtory, infant baptiſm was generally, if not univerſally, practiſed in the church more than twelve hundred years, though much corrupted. Notwithſtanding ſome have ſince called it in queſtion, yet, through all this long ſpace of time, there was no church or ſociety of chriſtians which denied infant baptiſm, except thoſe who denied all baptiſm with water. We have a particular authentic hiſtory, both of the firſt riſe and progreſs of this ſect that denied infant baptiſm. It firſt appeared in Germany at the place called Munſter, ſoon after the reformation from Popery.

If we grant, as the Baptiſts aſſert, that infant-baptiſm was neither allowed nor practiſed by the church in the apoſtolic age, it is utterly impoſſible that it ſhould have been introduced in any ſubſequent period of the church. They, therefore,

might as well aſſert that it never has been practiſed.

Let us now candidly examine this matter.—Some confidently affirm, that this practice was firſt introduced into the church in the dark days of Popery. This cannot poſſibly be true. It is eaſy to ſhew from the moſt authentic writers in thoſe times, that it was practiſed in the church long before; and, if I miſtake not, ſome of the Baptiſt writers themſelves allow that it was practiſed in the African church before the *dark period of Popery*. But be this as it may, it was not then firſt introduced into the church. If it was not the practice in the apoſtles' day, it muſt have begun in ſome of the ſucceeding ages before Popery.—It is generally allowed that it commonly prevailed through all the churches after the fourth century. Mr. Tombs, on the part of the Baptiſts,* expreſsly ſays, that St. Auſtin's authority carried it in the following ages almoſt without control; but St. Auſtin moſt ſolemnly profeſſes, that he never heard of any in his time that oppoſed infant-baptiſm. We have only the four firſt centuries to examine. We are certain that the practice was firſt begun in one of them. Let us, therefore, go back and ſee if we can poſſibly find when it was firſt introduced into the church.—Our brethren, the Baptiſts, are, with us, equally intereſted in this inquiry. St. Auſtin, who lived in the fourth century, ſpeaks of it as prevailing in his day; and that it was not decreed by any council, but had been ever in uſe. The ſame author, in his diſpute with the Pelagians about original ſin, brings infant-baptiſm as an unanſwerable proof of original corruption. This was about

* Part 1, Section 8.

A. D. 390. We alſo have a number of writers through the whole of this century, who ſpeak of infant-baptiſm, but ſay nothing of its introduction. As Siricius, A. D. 384, St. Ambroſe 374, Greg. Nazianzen 360, Optatus 306, the Council of Eliberius 305, and many others, mention infant-baptiſm as a thing in common uſe in the church. Thus, we ſee, it was not firſt introduced in the fourth century.*

In the third century, there are ſeveral remarkable teſtimonies concerning infant baptiſm, which make it very evident that it was not firſt introduced in that day. About the middle of this century Cyprian called a council of ſixty ſix miniſters or biſhops on this queſtion, "Whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old?" This council unanimouſly agreed, there was no neceſſity for ſuch a delay. In conſequence of this, a letter, which was ſigned by Cyprian, was written to the churches, to notify to them the reſult of their deliberation.

Origen, who was born leſs than an hundred years after the apoſtles, and flouriſhed in the beginning of this century, ſpeaks often of infant baptiſm in his homilies on Original Sin, as an eſtabliſhed practice in the church. In one place he expreſsly ſays, that the church had a traditional order from the apoſtles to give baptiſm to infants. This clearly ſhews, that infant baptiſm was then an uſage in the church. Tertullian alſo, who lived about the ſame time, mentions infant baptiſm as no novelty in his day. He pleads for the delaying of the baptiſm of infants on account only of the danger

* Hiſtory of Infant Baptiſm, part 1, chap. 7, 8, to the 23d. Dr. Forbaſius Hiſt. Theology.

which might attend the introduction of ſponſors. This can properly apply only in thoſe caſes, where parents were unbelievers, or were ſick. Jacob Pamelius obſerves, in his Annotations on this place, that Tertullian had reference to ſuch.*

From theſe obſervations, it is clear that infant baptiſm was not firſt introduced either in the third or fourth century. It certainly was not introduced in the fourth, becauſe we find it in the third—neither in the third, becauſe it is there ſpoken of as a common undiſputed practice. Our inquiry is now reduced to the limits only of two centuries, and it is clear to me, that infant baptiſm muſt have been introduced into the chriſtian church in one or the other. Let us now carefully examine the matter with reſpect to the ſecond century, the age that immediately followed the apoſtles and firſt miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt.

All the immediate ſucceſſors of the apoſtles muſt perſonally know, what was the practice of the apoſtles themſelves. The churches alſo muſt know whether their infants were baptized or not. If the miniſters and churches knew that infant baptiſm had never been practized by the apoſtles, it is utterly impoſſible that it ſhould then have been introduced into the church without making great diſturbance. It muſt have met with the greateſt oppoſition, both from the miniſters and churches, of primitive zeal and purity. Were that fact, is it credible that we ſhould not have heard ſomething of it, when ſome of the writings of thoſe Fathers have come down to us?—Two of them are frequently mentioned on this ſubject, but not a word that there was any controverſy in the

* Dr. Forbeſius' Hiſt. Theology.

church reſpecting infant baptiſm. Ireneus, who flouriſhed about the middle of this century, was acquainted with Polycarp, St. John's diſciple, and alſo ſaw and converſed with thoſe who had ſeen Jeſus Chriſt. He mentioned infant baptiſm as no matter of diſpute. Reckoning up ſeveral ſorts of perſons who were born again unto God, he expreſsly mentioned infants among them. It is naturally ſuppoſed that he there muſt mean their being born of the water, or baptized, as many of the Fathers uſed the word in this ſenſe, as infants could give evidence of no other regeneration.

Juſtin Martyr, who is ſuppoſed to have been born about thirty years after the death of our bleſſed Saviour, in his Apology, written in the year 140, mentions perſons who were diſcipled to Chriſt in infancy. He alſo ſpeaks of baptiſm being to us inſtead of circumciſion. Ignatius lived in the end of the firſt century. He converſed with the apoſtles, and ſuffered martyrdom under Trajan, A. D. 107.* But from none of theſe have we a word reſpecting the firſt riſe of infant baptiſm in their day. Since we have now purſued our inquiry back to the firſt century without ſucceſs, I would juſt make one remark here on the whole. If infant baptiſm is ſuch a groſs error and corruption—if its introduction deſtroys the very being of the church, it is utterly incredible, if not impoſſible, that the practice of it could have obtained, either in the ſecond, third, or fourth centuries, without its riſe and progreſs being mentioned, or even that there were ever ſuch heretics in the world. This remark obtains great weight when we conſider that St. Auſtin, in the cloſe of

* Dr. Forbeſius' Hiſt. Theology.

the fourth century, wrote a book, giving a particular account of all ſects that were, or ever had been in the church—(he enumerates eighty-eight with their ſeveral tenets.)—And when we find, in the writings of the Fathers, an account of all the particular errors, and ſmalleſt departures from the faith and practice once eſtabliſhed in the church, we are reduced to this dilemma, either that infant baptiſm was introduced into the church in the firſt century by the apoſtles themſelves, or that it never has been practiſed in any age of the world. —The latter is contrary to known fact. The former is the truth, and it is the very doctrine propoſed to be illuſtrated and eſtabliſhed by this diſcourſe. I ſhall now conclude with a few remarks.

1. We have both ſcripture command and example, for receiving infants of believers into the viſible church with their parents, and for adminiſtering to them the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith. This command and this example from Abraham the father of the faithful, evidently run through the whole of the Old and New Teſtaments. When Chriſt came and fulfilled the law and the prophets, he confirmed the covenant of promiſe, he enlarged it with greater privileges, and he continued it to believers under the glorious goſpel, as examples of infant baptiſm. We alſo have the evident practice of all the churches of Chriſt in ages of the greateſt zeal and purity. Thoſe who deny that there is either command or example for this practice, ought firſt to point out from authentic hiſtory, a church or ſociety of chriſtians, within twelve hundred years of the apoſtles, who did not practiſe infant baptiſm.

2. Thoſe who deny infant baptiſm have no juſt ground for breaking off from all the churches of Chriſt on this account; and much leſs for eſteeming themſelves the only true church in the world. For though they hold this to be an error, yet it is not ſuch as to ſubvert the foundation, nor indeed has it always been their ſentiments, as appears by a confeſſion of the faith of a hundred churches of their communion.* Awful have been the conſequences of this ſeparation, and, perhaps, nothing tarniſhed the glory of the reformation from Popery more than the conduct of its firſt founders. Thoſe, therefore, who, in the preſent day would break off from other churches of Chriſt and join this ſeparate communion, ought firſt well to conſider the nature of the action, leſt they be involved in the awful guilt of many generations. On the whole, it is high time that all party zeal was baniſhed from the church of Chriſt, and that all denominations were united in the common cauſe. The day of the Lord is at hand. In the mean time, let us give up ourſelves and all ours to God and to his diſpoſal—let us take hold of the covenant through Jeſus Chriſt, and thankfully enjoy the privileges—let us plead the promiſes for ourſelves and our children—and finally, let us wait patiently for his coming and kingdom, who will then reveal his righteous judgment, and reward every man according to his works.

* Printed in London, 1699.

SERMON V.

BELIEVERS AND THEIR OFFSPRING IN COVENANT WITH GOD.

ACTS, II. 39.

FOR THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND TO ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF, EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL.

IN the former part of this chapter, we have an account of that wonderful out-pouring of the Holy Ghoſt upon the apoſtles on the day of Pentecoſt. In the context we have Peter's ſolemn addreſs to the mixed multitude, collected together on that occaſion, in which the apoſtle proves to them that Jeſus Chriſt, whom they had taken, and by wicked hands crucified and ſlain, was the Son of God, the true Meſſiah and Saviour of the world. And he ſolemnly teſtifies that God had raiſed him from the dead, and had exalted *him* at his right hand, whoſe blood they had impiouſly imprecated on themſelves, and on their children. Under a ſenſe of this guilt they were pricked to

the heart, and, under awful apprehenſions of the divine wrath, in agonies of diſtreſs they cried out, men, brethren, what *ſhall* we do? The apoſtle then called them to repent of their ſins—to embrace the goſpel, and to be baptized in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, as the only way to eſcape the divine wrath, which was coming on that wicked generation, and as the only way to enjoy the bleſſings and privileges of the goſpel diſpenſation. This call they enforced by the weighty argument in our text. "For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call."

It is generally ſuppoſed that this declaration reſpects both Jews and Gentiles. The promiſe is to you, and to your children. This reſpects thoſe who were of the Jewiſh religion. The promiſe is to them who are afar off, when God ſhall call them, and to their children. This is ſuppoſed to have reference to the Gentiles, who ſhould alſo be gathered into the church by the goſpel, and ſhould then enjoy the bleſſings and privileges of the covenant of promiſe with God's people.

We have ſeen in the preceding diſcourſe, that all who believe are Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe; and that, by divine appointment, the infant children of ſuch are to be received with their parents, and to be baptized. But it has been aſked, what advantage is this to parents, or to their children? To give an anſwer to this queſtion ſhall be the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe. I ſhall, therefore, now endeavor, by divine aſſiſtance, to ſhew,

I. What the covenant of promiſe contains for believing parents with reſpect to themſelves.

II. What it contains for them with reſpect to their children.

III. Shew how parents may have an intereſt in this covenant, and enjoy its peculiar bleſſings and privileges for themſelves, and for their children.

1. Under this head I do not propoſe to ſpeak of thoſe bleſſings which are common to believers in general, but only of thoſe which are peculiar to them as parents. It is highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that as they have a peculiar truſt and charge, they alſo ſhould have ſpecial aſſiſtance, and particular bleſſings and privileges. The apoſtle ſays, they are bleſſed with faithful Abraham. Believing parents being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt, have not only their ſins forgiven; they have not only God for their God, for their father and portion—they have not only Jeſus Chriſt for their Saviour, the Holy Spirit for their Sanctifier; but, in the firſt place, they alſo have the great privilege, that their infant children ſhould be conſidered as in covenant with them. That this is a great privilege, every parental feeling is ready to acknowledge. It was before proved and illuſtrated, that under every diſpenſation of the covenant, this has been granted to believing parents, as God ſaid to Abraham, the father of believers, "I will be a God to thee and to thy ſeed after thee."

It muſt certainly be conſidered as a great favor to the parent, that the great and good God ſhould thus graciouſly mention their infant offſpring in the covenant with them. By this he doubtleſs intended to ſhew his condeſcending grace and mercy to his people, that they might be encouraged in the faithful diſcharge of their important truſt.

2. The covenant of promiſe, as has been proved in the former diſcourſe, contains, for believing parents, the privilege of giving up their children to God in baptiſm, through Jeſus Chriſt.—This is a great favor in every reſpect, but eſpecially, that by faith believers may thus bring their infants to the compaſſionate Saviour for his bleſſing—the Saviour who is ever preſent in his ordinances. When thus given to him, they may always with freedom, in their prayers, bring them to the throne of free covenant-grace and mercy; they may, with hope, commit them to God's fatherly care; and they may, by faith, take hold of the covenant of his own appointment, and plead its bleſſings for them, as for their own ſouls.

3. Another privilege this promiſe contains for parents is, that their children, in their infant and moſt helpleſs ſtate, may be, with them, members of the church. They may here conſider them, in a peculiar ſenſe, not their own, but the children of the houſehold of faith. They may conſider them the Lord's property, and that they are to be brought up for him. Theſe reflections will not only ſtrengthen all their obligations, but alſo greatly ſweeten all their care and labor. They afford, to believing parents, a ſovereign balm for all their wounds, and a ſweet cordial for all their fears reſpecting their dear infant-children. How wonderful are the condeſcending grace and goodneſs of God to his dear people! But how vile the ingratitude and unbelief of the human heart!

4. This promiſe contains, for believing parents, all needed wiſdom and grace to bring their offspring up for God, while he continues them under their care. How often do parents find their

ſtrength fail in trying circumſtances reſpecting them even in their infant-ſtate? But what a bleſſing have they in the covenant! Here is ſtrength and aſſiſtance; and, indeed, they never fail of obtaining a recruit when they come here by faith. In the riper years of their children how often do they find that they lack both wiſdom and grace to give them inſtruction, to reſtrain them from evil practices, and to bring them up for God? But here is both grace and wiſdom in ſtore. Here they may come freely by faith, and obtain mercy, wiſdom and grace to help in every time of need. God ſays, in the covenant of promiſe, I will be a God to thee, O believing parent! The promiſe is to thee in the character of a parent, and contains every bleſſing and grace neceſſary for the education of your children, who are devoted to his ſervice. Theſe bleſſings are treaſured up in Chriſt to be communicated to all thoſe parents who come to God for them by faith—by that faith which takes hold of the covenant—which works by love, and is productive of new obedience. Ignorant and unbelieving parents may think lightly of all theſe bleſſings, but they muſt certainly be exceeding precious to him who has been made ſenſible what it is to be without God in the world—to him who is ſenſible what it is to have a covenant-God and father through Jeſus Chriſt, and to him who knows what it is by faith to plead the precious promiſes for his own ſoul.—How ſupporting to the tender, faithful, parental heart, when ready to ſink under a view of the many evils which are thickly ſcattered in the vale of tears, through which their dear child muſt paſs! How ſupporting, I ſay, are theſe covenant-bleſſings, eſpecially when parents can take hold of the cove-

nant, and, by faith, obtain grace to inſtruct, warn, and guard their children, and thus cheerfully commit them to the holy keeping and diſpoſal of a heavenly father.

5. In this promiſe there is abundant mercy to make their prayers, inſtructions and corrections effectual. Here is not only grace to make them faithful, but mercy to render them ſucceſsful.—Pious parents, when they conſider the total depravity of the human heart—when they ſee that the imagination of the thoughts of the heart is evil, and only evil continually, and when, upon a ſmall trial, they perceive the obſtinacy of their children, then they are exceedingly apt to be diſcouraged. But the promiſe contains grace ſovereign and powerful enough to ſubdue the moſt ſtubborn will, and to break the hardeſt heart.—Here is mercy ſufficient to make the weak, but faithful and perſevering endeavors of pious parents ſucceſsful, on the moſt finiſhed piece of human corruption.—God ſays, "I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his houſehold after him, and they *ſhall* keep the way of the Lord—Gen. xviii. 19. Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he *will* not depart from it"—PROV. xxii. 6. The Lord himſelf anſwers for the event. To this ſource fainting believers ought always to look. Faithful Parents, who have given their children to God in covenant, may undoubtedly depend on the all-ſufficient mercy of a covenant-keeping God. Is this no advantage to parents? Is there no peculiar bleſſing for them who have given up themſelves and their children to God in covenant? Is there no ſuitable encouragement—no particular aſſiſtance for them in this covenant, which is ſo well

ordered in all things and ſure?—But here let me obſerve, that as theſe covenant-bleſſings are ſpiritual—the ſpiritual perſon only can enjoy them. They are ſo little attended to, and underſtood, and ſo little believed even by pious people in the preſent day, that we need not wonder they have ſo little apparent effect; and eſpecially when ſo few parents take hold of the covenant truly by faith, and are active and diligent in the uſe of all thoſe means by which God communicates the covenanted-bleſſings to his people.

Sixthly, and laſtly—Should it pleaſe God to take away the infants of believers by death, the promiſe gives them full liberty, by faith, to commit, through Jeſus Chriſt, their infants, as their own ſouls, into their heavenly Father's hands.—To this great privilege they are undoubted heirs, as children of Abraham. No favor, perhaps, could be more grateful to the feelings, no bleſſing more ſuitable to the deſires, and no privilege could more exactly correſpond, than this, with the wiſhes of a pious parent, in ſuch an affecting ſituation. O parent! behold the grace and condeſcending goodneſs of a covenant-God and Father.

II. I am to ſhew, what are the promiſes and bleſſings contained in this covenant, for believing parents, reſpecting their children.

Firſt—In their infant and moſt helpleſs ſtate, they are admitted into Chriſt's family on earth—This is no ſmall privilege. How great would you think the favor to your children, to be taken into the family of an earthly king? But the church is the houſhold of faith, the family of the king of kings. Here are the richeſt promiſes, and greateſt bleſſings, and here is a foundation for the moſt

ſanguine expectations. In this ſituation they are intereſted in all the public prayers for the welfare of the church, and they ought to be always remembered in the private and ſecret petitions of all God's people.

Secondly—The God of Abraham is their God—The promiſe is to believing parents, and to their children. "I will be a God to thee and to thy ſeed." This is certainly an ineſtimable bleſſing of the covenant, which believers have for their infants. God, therefore, will preſerve them through the dangers of their infant ſtate, or will take them to himſelf. All this is doubtleſs implied in his being their God. For if believers are, by the divine command, to give their infants to God, and they in obedience, do give them up to him as he hath appointed, will he not accept them? He certainly will, and through Jeſus Chriſt, he doubtleſs becomes their God in life, agreeably to the tenor of the gracious covenant. But to ſuch as die in an infant ſtate, he is forever a God and portion. Thus only can this be an everlaſting covenant reſpecting ſuch, and in this view alone his mercy to them endureth forever. Thoſe, therefore, who believe that the promiſe contains any thing reſpecting the infants of believers, who die in their infant ſtate, can hardly doubt of its ſecuring to them the ſaving bleſſings of the covenant in the eternal world. What bleſſings are here for the dying infants of believers? bleſſings infinitely rich—infinitely free!—This is not a new ſentiment—It was holden, and firmly believed by the moſt zealous and pious ancient fathers in the church.

Should theſe infants, on the contrary, live and advance to the ſtate of childhood, there are ſtill

great bleſſings for them in this gracious covenant.

Firſt—That grace, promiſed to believing parents to make them faithful, has ſome ſpecial reference to children in this ſtate. If believing parents have grace to be faithful, this is a great bleſſing, not to parents only, but alſo in a very ſpecial manner to their children: It gives them the advantage of their faithful pious inſtruction.

Secondly—Believing parents, reſpecting their children in this ſtate, have the promiſe of the bleſſing to attend faithful inſtruction and diſcipline. Prov. xxii. 6—xxiii. 13, 14—xx. 7. "Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he *will not* depart from it—Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beateſt him with a rod, he *ſhall not* die—Thou ſhalt beat him with the rod, and *ſhall deliver* his ſoul from hell. The juſt man walketh in his integrity; *his children are bleſſed* after him." What precious promiſes! What unſpeakable bleſſings for their children! If God graciouſly grants his bleſſing to attend the faithful care of pious parents, this will certainly make it effectual, and lay a glorious foundation for their children's *uſefulneſs* here, and for their eternal felicity in the world to come. This has often been the caſe, and it is more than probable always will be the caſe, where parents take hold of the covenant, and are perſeveringly faithful in their inſtruction and diſcipline towards their children, agreeably to the following paſſages of ſacred ſcripture.—"And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations for an everlaſting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee. For I know him, that he will command his

children, and his houſhold after him, and they *ſhall* keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment, *that* the Lord *may bring* upon Abraham that which he hath ſpoken of him"—Gen. xvii. 7. and xviii. 19. "So then they which be of faith are bleſſed with faithful Abraham. That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt, that we might receive the promiſe of the ſpirit through faith"—Gal. iii. 9—14. "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and *I will* direct their work in truth, and *I will* make an everlaſting covenant with them; and *their ſeed ſhall be known* among the Gentiles, and *their offspring* among the people: all that ſee *them ſhall* acknowledge *them*, that *they are* the *ſeed which the Lord hath bleſſed. They ſhall not labor in vain*, nor bring forth for trouble: for *they are* the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and *their offspring with them.*" Iſaiah lxi. 8, 9. and lxv. 23.

Thirdly—In this ſtate the children of believers, in covenant, are alſo under the care, watch, and diſcipline of the church. This alſo is no ſmall privilege. And where the church is faithful, it moſt certainly is a very great bleſſing; not only as a powerful incitement to faithfulneſs in parents, but alſo as it adds great weight to their parental inſtruction and diſcipline.

In this age, human nature is capable of the moſt deep and laſting impreſſions. The foundation of a future life of virtue or vice, and conſequently of happineſs or miſery, is much oftener laid in childhood than is generally imagined.—In this age, therefore, to have our children under the care, watch, and diſcipline of the church—under the

faithful inſtruction of pious parents, attended with divine aſſiſtance and bleſſing, muſt be conſidered, by every ſerious and enlightened mind, as advantages unſpeakably great—as privileges moſt important and precious.

Fourthly—In childhood alſo they have a ſpecial intereſt in the prayers of the church and people of God. As members with their parents, they are included in all the prayers which are made for the church throughout the whole world. How great an advantage this may be none can tell. When we conſider, that God is pleaſed to beſtow the greateſt bleſſings in anſwer to the prayers of his dear people; and when we conſider, that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much, James, v. 16. we muſt conſider this is no ſmall privilege.

In adult age there are ſtill peculiar privileges and bleſſings for the children of believers, unleſs they have cut themſelves off by their wickedneſs, or have been excluded by the diſcipline of the church.

Though the ax is now laid at the root of the tree, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit muſt finally be hewn down; and though ſomething more is required of them, as adults, that they may enjoy all the privileges of the church, yet they are ſtill under the care and diſcipline of the church. This is undoubtedly a great privilege, and if properly and faithfully exerciſed over ſuch by the church, may actually be to them, under divine influence, one of the greateſt bleſſings. They are under the bonds of the covenant—the ſacred ties are ſtill upon them to be the Lord's—the way of ſin is more hedged up from ſuch, and the way

to final deſtruction more barred. Theſe are no ſmall advantages.—Such ſtill have a ſpecial intereſt in the prayers of the church and people of God, which may, and will prevail, unleſs obſtinately rejected and deſpiſed. They muſt be under great advantages for eternal life. Thus lifted up to heaven, in point of privilege, if they periſh, they muſt diſſolve every ſacred tie—break through every barrier; they muſt burſt aſunder every band, and obſtinately plunge themſelves headlong into remedileſs deſtruction. Theſe, my brethren, are ſome of the ineſtimable bleſſings and privileges of the covenant of promiſe, in which believing parents, for themſelves, and for their children, are intereſted. Surely they cannot be conſidered either few, or ſmall, by any ſerious mind; on the contrary, I am perſuaded that, what advantage is the covenant of promiſe? and what profit is their in baptiſm? would never have been queſtions had miniſters always been faithful in diſpenſing the privilege, and had parents and churches diſcharged their reſpective obligations.

It is, indeed, a melancholy truth, that in the preſent day, the viſibility of the peculiar bleſſings of the covenant of promiſe have almoſt diſappeared. To this, perhaps, more than to any thing elſe, it may be attributed, that ſo many parents, who hold to the covenant, are ſo eaſy in the neglect of baptiſm for their children; and alſo, that ſo many wholly deny infant baptiſm. Had the adminiſtration of infant baptiſm never been corrupted—had the church kept up the primitive diſcipline over both parents and children; and eſpecially, had parents always been faithful to their children, according to the covenant, we have the greateſt aſſur-

ance, that all the peculiar covenant bleſſings would have been enjoyed by believers and their children. The world would then have known that theſe are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and their offſpring with them.

III. I am now to ſhew how parents may be intereſted in the covenant of promiſe, and enjoy the peculiar bleſſings and privileges of it, for themſelves, and their children.

Two things here are the ſubject of inquiry—

1. How parents may be intereſted in the covenant of promiſe. 2. How they may enjoy the peculiar bleſſings and privileges of the covenant reſpecting themſelves and their children, under the goſpel diſpenſation.

With reſpect to the firſt, it is clear from what has been ſaid, that parents muſt be true believers in order to be intereſted in the covenant; or in ſcripture language, they muſt be Chriſt's, and conſequently Abraham's ſeed, to be heirs according to the promiſe. The apoſtle ſays expreſsly, "if any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt he is none of his." Romans, viii. 9.—Therefore he is not intereſted in the covenant of promiſe, and can have no right to its privileges.

But how parents, under the goſpel, may enjoy all the peculiar bleſſings and privileges of ſuch, for themſelves, and for their children, muſt now have a more particular diſcuſſion.

Some, through ignorance and unbelief, reject and deſpiſe them. Many acknowledge the covenant, and have their children baptized, and yet do not appear to enjoy any of its ſpiritual bleſſings: and ſome, who are intereſted in the covenant, and appear really to give up their children to God in

baptiſm, yet ſeem to loſe the parental bleſſing. Parents need all theſe promiſes and bleſſings—they are treaſured up in Chriſt for them—they are clearly propoſed, and freely offered to them, in the covenant of promiſe. But O how affecting! how diſtreſſing muſt it be to miſs of them, whatever may be the cauſe!

To illuſtrate this matter, I would ſuggeſt a few things.—Parents, I beſeech you, give your moſt ſerious attention—look to God for his bleſſing, and may the Father of light give you underſtanding. To give yourſelves and your children to God, and to his church, in covenant, through Jeſus Chriſt, is neceſſary, in order to have an intereſt in the covenant.—Covenant bleſſings are given in a covenant way.

Firſt—To inſure the enjoyment of theſe bleſſings, parents muſt believe, and take hold of the covenant. Not to believe is, perhaps, in God's view, to reject the covenant—not to take hold of it, and depend upon it, is probably to ſlight the covenant with all its bleſſings. This, perhaps, may be the very reaſon, why ſo few parents enjoy theſe peculiar parental bleſſings. It is highly reaſonable, and it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, to ſuppoſe, that when God makes gracious propoſals to parents, and they believe them, take hold and depend upon them, as propoſed, that the bleſſings are ſure, and the enjoyment certain.

Secondly—Let parents go to God as to a father, through Chriſt, and aſk theſe covenant bleſſings—let this be a continual fervent prayer. It is reaſonable, and, in ſome reſpects, it ſeems neceſſary to the very enjoyment of them, that parents ſhould aſk theſe bleſſings of their heavenly Father. "Aſk,"

ſays the bleſſed Saviour, "and ye ſhall receive." The apoſtle James ſays, "If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him. But let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering." —If parents, therefore, are ſo ignorant of the covenant, and ſo faithleſs reſpecting its bleſſings, that they do not aſk for them, it is no wonder that they fail of their enjoyment.

Thirdly—Let parents be faithful to the covenant reſpecting their children, in training them up in the way they ſhould go, and in bringing them up for God, agreeably to his will. This is of the laſt importance, and ſeems to be a condition of the enjoyment of covenant bleſſings reſpecting their children. Parents, who are not faithful in this, do break the covenant. They make light of the promiſe, and thus loſe the bleſſing. But, on the other hand, thoſe parents, who are faithful, and bring up their children for God, agreeably to the tenor of the covenant, may depend on the enjoyment of the bleſſings in their fulleſt extent, with regard both to themſelves and their children, and with regard to time and eternity. Should any ſay, that this is carrying the matter too far, and that, by proving too much, we overſet the whole, and prove nothing. Should any ſay, that the faithfulneſs neceſſary to obtain this, is wholly unattainable in this imperfect ſtate. I anſwer, that the objection is very plauſible, and probably, with ſome, has more weight than merit. But let us try its weight in a ſimilar caſe. According to ſcripture the Chriſtian muſt be faithful in order to enjoy the covenant bleſſing for his own ſoul. For the unfaithful will doubtleſs be ſhut out.—But how is this? Can a be-

liever in this imperfect ſtate be ſo faithful with reſpect to the covenant, as to enſure for himſelf the promiſed bleſſings for time and eternity? And why not in the caſe before us? eſpecially as we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that here a greater perfection of faithfulneſs is required.

IMPROVEMENT.—1. We learn the duty of parents, under the goſpel, reſpecting their children. This is, in general, to ſecure the covenant bleſſings for them, by giving them to God in baptiſm, and bringing them up for him in the goſpel way. To this, parents, the goſpel invites you in our text: "For the promiſe is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call." The church ſays come —miniſters call upon you to become heirs according to the covenant of promiſe—to be faithful, and inſure the peculiar, parental bleſſings for yourſelves and for your dear offspring. But to be more particular—it is your duty, when your children are thus given up to God, to conſider them his, and to take the moſt tender care of them for him in their infant ſtate. You ought to pray for them, and particularly by faith to take hold of the covenant, and aſk for them, and for yourſelves, the peculiar parental bleſſings. When they are capable of inſtruction, you are bound, by the moſt ſolemn ties, carefully and perſeveringly to teach them the will of God, their heavenly Father. You are to continue in prayer both with, and for them.—It is your duty conſtantly to ſet before them good examples in all godlineſs and holineſs. It is your duty, as parents, to reſtrain them from wicked ways—from wicked company, and from all dangerous and corrupting practices, however faſhionable.—When

neceſſary, you ought to uſe the rod of paternal correction, always remembering that there is in it a promiſed bleſſing. It is alſo your duty to call, if neceſſary, upon the church for aſſiſtance to reſtrain and govern your children according to the ſcriptures. In all things you muſt look to God for his bleſſing.

2. The duty of children, eſpecially of thoſe who are given up to God—It is their duty to be the Lord's. But to be more particular—It is your duty, O ye little ones! the dear lambs of the flock—it is your duty to obey your parents in the Lord. God has put you under their care, and given them authority over you. You are bound to receive their inſtruction—to hearken to their counſel—to yield to their reſtraints, and obey their commands agreeably to his will. You are to be obedient to the calls and inſtructions of your miniſter—of your Chriſtian friends, and of the church, always remembering your ſolemn obligations. It is your duty to renounce all the ſinful pleaſures and vanities of this world—the luſt of the fleſh, and the cauſe of the devil. You are under the moſt ſacred obligations to give up yourſelves to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, to join the cauſe and people of God, and to devote yourſelves to his intereſt and ſervice for ever and ever.

I ſhall now conclude with a ſhort addreſs to parents and to children.

Firſt—Let me ſpeak a few words to thoſe profeſſing parents, who deny the covenant, and infant baptiſm.—Let me, my brethren, moſt ſolemnly beſeech you impartially and candidly to examine the ſacred ſcriptures on this ſubject.—With all meekneſs let me entreat you to attend, without prejudice,

to what has been now offered to your conſideration. You may be aſſured it comes from a friendly heart—a heart that ardently wiſhes well to you, and to your dear children, that you may have a large ſhare in the peculiar parental bleſſings of the covenant of promiſe. Conſider, if you err in this matter, what an affecting loſs you muſt ſuſtain, both as to yourſelves and your dear offspring. Conſider what encouragement, aſſiſtance and comfort you are deprived of as parents—what covenant-privileges and bleſſings for your dear little ones are loſt for ever!—Theſe you, as parents, ought to have received by faith, according to the covenant of promiſe, and ſecured to them for time and eternity. Be cordially willing to receive the truth, and may the Lord give you underſtanding, and to his name be all the glory.

Secondly—Let me addreſs thoſe who have given up themſelves and their children to God in covenant. You, my dear brethren, are intereſted in this gracious covenant—here are treaſures of good things—here are precious promiſes for you, and for your children. But can you be ſatisfied with the bare right without the enjoyment of the bleſſings? If you can, you are doubtleſs of thoſe who have a name to live but are dead.—Ye drowſy parents, let me beſeech you to awake! Conſider what a price is put into your hands, and conſider how much depends on your faithfulneſs! Do your dear little ones look to you for temporal bleſſings under God? Does your daily labor ſupply their wants?—In the covenant of promiſe God has made more ample proviſion for their precious ſouls. He has given you much greater encouragement to labor, that you may obtain for them the meat which en-

dureth to eternal life. The unfaithful parent is, in this respect, cruel like the ostrich.—But I would hope better things of you: Be faithful to the souls of your dear children, that you and they may enjoy the peculiar blessings of the covenant of promise, and be truly the seed of the blessed of the Lord.

Thirdly—To parents who have not given up themselves to God, nor their children in baptism.—You have heard of the covenant of promise, proposed to you freely, through Jesus Christ, with all its blessings; yet, alas! you neglect to comply. Can you be easy in this situation? Here are parental blessings—but where are your parental feelings? Tremble lest your children perish with you. It is true, they are not beyond the reach of uncovenanted mercy. But what will become of you, a faithless parent?—Never, never be easy in this awful situation—"Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Fourthly—To those children who have, from their infancy, been given up to God in baptism.—You, my dear children, have been set apart, in a peculiar manner, for God, who has been pleased to distinguish you from others in the covenant of promise. He has put you under great advantages to know, to love, to serve him, and to be happy for ever: He has graciously hedged up from you the path of vice, and barred the broad way to destruction—and he has opened before you the path of virtue, and smoothed for you the narrow way of life and eternal happiness. My dear children, I now beseech you, know the God of your fathers: He is the best of beings—He is a good God—his

favor is life, and bleſſed are they whom he bleſſeth : Let it be your firſt thing to ſeek the Lord—You have the greateſt encouragement. If you ſeek him early, you ſhall find him. Remember you are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to be his. Receive, I beſeech you, the inſtructions and admonitions of thoſe who are over you in the Lord —of thoſe who earneſtly pray for, and ſteadily ſeek your everlaſting welfare :—Cheerfully obey your parents in the Lord ;—you know not how often they bend their knees at the throne of grace, in agonies of prayer, for you. Remember—oh ! do remember, as you grow up, that the ax is laid at the root of the tree. If, therefore, you do not bring forth good fruit you muſt certainly be cut down, and caſt into everlaſting fire. *But* if, after all, you grow up in wickedneſs, how great muſt be your guilt, and how aggravated all your ſins ? —Should any of you thus go on in ſin with the wicked, and finally periſh, certainly, in the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for the children of Sodom and Gomorrah than for you.

Laſtly—One word to thoſe children who are not given up to God in covenant by baptiſm.—Though your parents have not given up themſelves, nor you, to God in covenant, and though you have no ſpecial intereſt in covenant bleſſings and privileges, yet you are in a goſpel land, and have many advantages for eternal life. You have the calls—the offers and invitation of the goſpel. You are called to give up yourſelves to God through Jeſus Chriſt. There is proviſion enough in the uncovenanted mercy of God. The door of mercy is open. If you repent and come to Chriſt he will receive you, while he rejects thoſe wicked children who,

though they are baptized, yet ſtill go on in ſin, and deſpiſe the God of their fathers. Be perſuaded to ſeek the Lord—be not diſcouraged, for though you are now afar off, you may yet be brought nigh by the blood of Chriſt. The goſpel is come to you. Now is the accepted time—now is the day of ſalvation. The time is ſhort—The day of grace may be ſoon over, and the day of wrath may quickly be at hand. Awake—fly from the wrath to come.—Lay hold on the bleſſed hope now ſet before you. Youth is a good time—It often is the only time, and it always is the beſt time to make your peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt.—Come then—O now come! for all things are ready. The Spirit and the Bride ſay come: Let him that heareth ſay come—and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely—May the God of mercy bleſs his own word, and to his name be all the glory for ever and ever—

AMEN.

THE

SUBJECT

OF BEING

BURIED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM,

ILLUSTRATED

IN A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT BYFIELD, MAY 18, 1806.

BY REV. ELIJAH PARISH,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THAT PLACE.

A

SERMON.

COLOSSIANS, II. 12.

Buried with him in Baptism.

RELIGION is the beſt inheritance of man. It fills the heart with peace, and hope, and joy. Religion aſſiſts man to direct his own powers, and to govern his own paſſions; to ſee God in all events, to acquieſce in ſevereſt trials; to endure ſorrows, and enjoy proſperity. The ſhafts of miſery are broken; their poiſon reaches not the heart, warmed with chriſtian love. The gathering clouds of anxiety, which obſtruct every proſpect of delight, are ſcattered by the rays, beaming from the ſun of righteouſneſs. The breaſt throbbing with guilt and remorſe is ſoothed and cheered by a view of Calvary, and the Saviour bleeding on the croſs. The preſent world aſſumes a new complexion, and futurity opens with undeſcribable ſplendor. The goſpel appears excellent; its doctrines reaſonable, and conſiſtent; its duties practicable, and pleaſant; its promiſes, ſatisfying and glorious.

The adamantine heart is diſſolved by the pervading influence of the goſpel; lions and lambs are united; and hoſtile ſpirits become friends and brothers. They are allied to angels; they are in union with God. They are one with Chriſt, as he is one with the father. They are the ſons of God, are entitled to thrones of glory, and enjoy heaven, while on earth. Goſpel truth is the fountain of this felicity. But errors dangerous, often mingle with truth; the effects are deplorable; the proſpect is melancholy.

Many errors incorporated with the chriſtian ſyſtem, many abſurdities, which bewilder the minds of men, have their origin in figurative expreſſions. Giving theſe a literal interpretation, or ſuppoſing them to mean more than the author deſigned, equally diverts the reader from truth and ſafety. A miſapplication of ſcripture figures has, frequently, been the occaſion of opinions, abſurd; of rites, ſuperſtitious and injurious; of doctrines, wicked and impious. The moſt irrational parts of the papal religion, the moſt ridiculous rites, adopted by fanatics, have been the offspring of figures, miſunderſtood.

In the text and context is a ſucceſſion of figures, deſigned in different ways, to illuſtrate and enforce the ſame fact. Verſe 11. "In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion, *made without hands*, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh by the circumciſion of Chriſt." That is, in putting off the old man, you are circumciſed without hands; the work is effected by the Holy Spirit.—You are born again, which is ſpiritual circumciſion. "Circumciſion is that of the *heart*." This renewing of the Holy Spirit conſiſts in putting off

the body of ſin, in renouncing ſin, and reforming the life. Or, we are "buried with him in baptiſm." As the burial of Jeſus Chriſt gave evidence, that he had really died, the juſt for the unjuſt; that he had yielded himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin; ſo we in our ſpiritual circumciſion or baptiſm, the figure now uſed, ſhow ourſelves to be really dead to ſin, crucified in the luſts of our minds. As Chriſt, when buried, was dead and ſeparated from the world; ſo in regeneration we become ſeparate from ſin. We are new creatures, having put off the old man. We are buried from the wicked indulgences and purſuits of the world.

The death, burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, are, not only cauſes, but types and ſymbols to repreſent the death of our ſins, our putting off the old man, and becoming new creatures.*

No reference is made in the text to the water of baptiſm, any more than to the knife of circumciſion in the preceding verſe. The Writer is ſpeaking of that baptiſm, and of that alone, in which we "are riſen with Chriſt, through the faith, which is the operation of God." This certainly can be nothing leſs than *ſpiritual* baptiſm, or regeneration; for the moſt violent advocate for dipping, or plunging, or burying, will not pretend, that this, neceſſarily, is connected with "faith;" he will allow it may be *poſſible* for a man to be plunged and buried in *water*, and yet not have "the faith, which is the operation of God." If he allow this, and allow this he muſt and will, then our text is no ſupport of his cauſe. It cannot be water baptiſm, which is mentioned.

* See Pool's Synopſis on the text, Henry, Edwards, Cleaveland, Guiſe, Watts, &c.

Were not this the fact, nothing could be inferred reſpecting the *mode* of baptiſm. It would then only ſignify that, as Chriſt was buried and ſeparated from the world; ſo we in baptiſm are buried and ſeparated from a world of ſin. The zeal for the literal conſtruction of this figure may, perhaps, be extinguiſhed by indulging it in other inſtances. St. Paul ſays, "I am crucified with Chriſt." Would any perſon ſuppoſe from this, that he had been led to Calvary, nailed to the croſs, and pierced by the ſoldier's ſpear? Chriſtians are ſaid to be "circumciſed in Chriſt." Does any one infer from this that all chriſtians experience the bloody rite of the Jews? Or, becauſe chriſtians "are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings," are all chriſtians, therefore, betrayed by Judas, ſpit upon, buffeted, and crowned with thorns? Or, becauſe St. Paul ſays the Philippians were his "*crown*," were they, therefore, formed into a crown of honor, and worn as a badge of future glory? Or, becauſe the ſacrament repreſents the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, are all worthy communicants crucified? Were our Baptiſt brethren conſiſtent with themſelves, ſuch would be their explanation of theſe paſſages of ſcripture.

It immediately follows our text; "wherein alſo you were riſen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead." Wherein, or in which baptiſm "we are riſen," actually "riſen with Chriſt by the faith" which God gives to the new creature. You, who have this ſpiritual baptiſm, riſe like Chriſt above the ſelfiſh motives, and ſenſual purſuits of a fallen world. You ſeek the kingdom of God; you aſpire after divine good.

Perſons, born again, like Jeſus Chriſt, ſeparate their hearts from the world, and riſe to a divine life. That this is the only true conſtruction of the text, may be inferred from a correſponding paſſage. Rom vi. 4. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life." By ſpiritual baptiſm we partake the privileges of Chriſt's death. By dying to ſin ourſelves, as we do in the new birth, we reſemble Jeſus Chriſt in his death, who died "to make an end of ſin." As Chriſt was raiſed from the grave; ſo we, not in water baptiſm, but in regeneration or ſpiritual baptiſm, are "raiſed" to walk in newneſs of life. Old things are done away; *all* things are become new. If we have experienced this ſpiritual baptiſm, we ſhall have the ſpirit of Chriſt. We ſhall be ſeparate from the world of ſin, as Chriſt was in the grave, and we ſhall like him riſe to a holy, a new life. We obey a new maſter, ſeek a new way of ſalvation, act from new motives, to accompliſh new deſigns; we chooſe new companions, experience new ſorrows, and new joys. As if buried, we are ſeparate from our former lives.

Doctrine. In regeneration we are new creatures. In attending to this, we ſhall ſhow in a few particulars that chriſtians are new creatures, and then the reaſonableneſs of this change.

1. Chriſtians are new creatures.

Thoſe, who experience the change, mentioned in the text, have a new temper of heart.

Before regeneration, they ſought worldly pleaſure; they are now mortified to the world; they were before, lovers of the world, they are now

crucified to the world ; they before lived only for the world, they are now dead to the world ; they are " buried" from the world.

Once, they idolized the diſtinctions of life ; now they riſe above thoſe diſtinctions ; they are independent of thoſe diſtinctions. They do not lean on them for their richeſt felicities. Though they do not hate the world, nor deſpiſe it, nor value it below its worth ; though with ſubmiſſion, they ſtill deſire its advantages, as far as they conceive, their comfort or uſefulneſs may be promoted ; yet they are patient, they are happy without them. Once, they made haſte to be rich ; they envied ; they coveted the ſplendid dwellings, the ſpacious poſſeſſions, the rich treaſures of their opulent neighbors. Now they rejoice in the riches of others ; the happineſs of others makes them happy.

Once, they were not contented with a good name, which is better than precious ointment ; they ſought the friendſhip, the praiſe, the applauſe, the admiration of the world. Now they ſtand in their lot ; they deſpiſe not thoſe below, nor envy thoſe who climb.

Once, they were haters of God ; their hearts were enmity againſt God ; they ſaid in their hearts, " No God," or they wiſhed no God exiſted. They were alive, all life without a knowledge of the divine law ; but the commandment has come with power, ſlain their corrupt paſſions ; they are dead to ſin. Now the love of God is ſhed abroad in their hearts ; they love him with their warmeſt affections. The almighty power of God is their ſtrong tower of defence. The Lord reigneth ; they are ſafe and happy, he will do all his pleaſure, make the wrath of man to praiſe him, and care-

fully reſtrain the remainder of wrath. This fills them with hope and faith.

The omniſcience of God is the comfort and joy of good men. All their diſtreſſes and dangers are known to him; the ſofteſt whiſper, the moſt ſecret wiſh, muſt inſtantly reach his throne. This encourages them, not only to play the man for their God, knowing that his eye is conſtantly upon them; but to open their hearts before him in all their wants. The mercy, the grace, and forbearance of God, oppreſs pious hearts with a ſenſe of obligation. Often with ſtrong cries, having no adequate words, they make known their ſenſe of divine goodneſs, of ſparing mercy. The mercy of God, as expreſſed in the goſpel, fills their hearts with ſentiments too tender and ſublime for utterance. In ſilent wonder and gladneſs they contemplate the merits of that blood, which cleanſeth from all ſin; they love God; they delight in God with all their hearts.

Inſtead of rolling ſin as a ſweet morſel under their tongues; inſtead of ſaying to others, "ſtand by, I am holier than thou;" inſtead of thanking God, that they are not as other men, they loathe and abhor themſelves; they feel themſelves, the chief of ſinners; they judge and condemn themſelves; they repent in duſt and aſhes. Oh wretched men that we are, they cry, "who ſhall deliver us from the body of this death? When we would do good, evil is preſent with us. We are more brutiſh than any men; we have not the underſtanding of men. We will accept the puniſhment of our ſins; we will bear the indignation of the Lord. Wherefore ſhould living men complain for the puniſhment of their ſins."

Thoſe, born again, inſtead of deſiring Jeſus Chriſt to depart out of their coaſt, view him as altogether lovely, chooſe him as their city of refuge, their ark of ſafety, their hiding place from the ſtorm. To them Jeſus Chriſt is precious. They give up all other hopes; they ſacrifice all other dependences. Jeſus Chriſt is the Lord, their righteouſneſs. Their expreſſive language is, "Lord we believe, help thou our unbelief."

Their motives are changed. Before they had put off the old man, they were *themſelves* the object of all their deſires, their love, their purſuits. They had no affection, more generous; no deſign, more elevated; no wiſh, more noble, than to promote their own intereſt. Natural men love their own-ſelves; they look every one on his own things. But men renewed by the Holy Ghoſt have the charity, which ſeeketh not her own. When the honor of God ſeemeth expoſed, like the captain of Iſrael, they ſolicitouſly enquire of God, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" "I am concerned for the honor of thy name; wilt thou not protect thine own glory?" On the trembling mount of Sinai their lawgiver had expreſſed the ſame dignified ſentiments. When God was threatening to "conſume" his people, Moſes enquires, "Wherefore ſhould the Egyptians ſpeak and ſay, for *miſchief* did he bring them out to ſlay them in the mountains, and to conſume them from the face of the earth?" "Why ſhould the ruin of Iſrael cauſe thy rectitude to be decried and reproached among the heathen?"

Men, born again, buried with Chriſt, have alſo a concern for the good of others, for the happineſs and ſalvation of their enemies. The importunate,

impaſſioned interceſſions of Abram in behalf of Sodom, expreſs the ſympathetic, benevolent ſolicitude of pious ſouls. He prays, that the people may be ſpared, that they may be ſpared for the ſake of fifty righteous; he then prays they may be ſpared for the ſake of forty and five; that they may be ſpared for the ſake of forty, for the ſake of thirty, for twenty, for ten. Abram was ſafe himſelf, his dwellings, his flocks and herds, were ſecure from danger; yet was he concerned, and afflicted, and diſtreſſed for his neighbors, expoſed to the anger of God. Such is the ſpirit of renewed men. They have the ſpirit of Chriſt. He loved us and died for us, while we were enemies; ſo do his people love their enemies, bleſs thoſe, who curſe them, and do good to them, who deſpitefully uſe them, and perſecute them. They pity their wicked enemies; they are concerned for their welfare; they are alarmed at their dangers. Often when they ſee their enemies indulging reſentment, or other malignant paſſions, they long to cry out, like Paul to the jailor, "Do thyſelf no harm." Such are the feelings of pious parents, neighbors, and miniſters; with bleeding hearts are they often ready to exclaim to thoſe, who unreaſonably oppoſe themſelves, "Do thyſelf no harm;" "do not deſtroy thy precious ſoul."

The great object of thoſe, born again, is to anſwer the purpoſes of their exiſtence. They deſire to honor God, to build up his cauſe, to promote his religion, to extend the triumphs of his goſpel, to comfort and eſtabliſh his people, to convince and perſuade his enemies, to ſanctify and ſave their own ſouls. United to God, and the cauſe of God, they are one with Chriſt; they are one themſelves; they have one motive, one ſpirit, one faith, one character.

2. The *conduct* of thoſe, buried with Chriſt, or born again, is changed.

Such are new creatures. Their internal baptiſm, wrought "by the operation of God," produces a viſible reformation.

How different is the viſible appearance of St. Paul, a meſſenger of the goſpel, from Saul the Phariſee. Then was he furiouſly haling men and women to priſon; then could he aſſiſt in the execution, and exult in the dying agonies of a holy martyr. Now is he ready to ſpend and be ſpent in the cauſe of Jeſus; now all things are loſs and droſs, compared with the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt; now he could wiſh himſelf accuſed, that his brethren might receive this divine redeemer.

See Zacheus, while a collector of the revenue, abuſing, and defrauding, and falſely accuſing his fellow citizens. See this ſame Zacheus, exerciſing the faith of the goſpel, ſitting at the feet of Jeſus, making ample reſtitution for all his frauds, and doing to others, as he would wiſh others to do to him.

See the Jailor, while a man of the world, "thruſting the diſciples into the inner priſon, making their feet doubly faſt in the ſtocks," exerciſing the utmoſt rigor of the law. See the ſame Jailor, experiencing the change mentioned in the text, he waſhes the ſtripes of the diſciples; like the good Samaritan, he pours in wine and oil, to heal their wounds; like his divine Lord he binds up the broken hearted, he opens the priſon to them that were bound; he gives liberty to his captives. He ſpreads his table; he ſets meat before them. He does them good, becauſe they are the diſciples of Jeſus.

Nor does he consult "with flesh and blood;" he waits not to consult his neareſt friends; he waits not to go abroad to Enon or Jordan; but *the same hour of the night*, before he spreads his generous table, he and his family are baptized.

Those, who are buried and risen with Christ, are prepared to worship God in the beauty of holiness, to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.

Observe the man of prayer. Alone he converses with his heavenly father; in public he increases the solemnity of the congregation. At one time he whispers a feeble wish at the throne of mercy. At another time his desires kindle, his religious affections glow; his prayer is ardent, importunate, impassioned, and resistless; he cries, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." Such are the salt of the earth; the light of the world.

We are secondly to show the reasonableness of this character, or of this change.

1. This change of character is reasonable, because God requires it.

He is a God of wisdom, and by him actions are weighed. In wisdom hath he made and directed all things, and in his wisdom, he hath required this change. He commands men to make them new hearts, to repent, and believe in Jesus Christ. He hath commanded men to turn their feet into the paths of his testimonies, to love the Lord God with all their hearts, to be crucified to the world, and dead to sin. He hath commanded all men to be holy in all manner of conversation, to be perfect as he is perfect. Here is sufficient evidence that the change of our hearts is a reasonable duty.

2. The change we have conſidered muſt be reaſonable, becauſe it tends to the general good.

True religion breathes glory to God, peace on earth, and good will to men. True religion is in union with all the attributes and works of God. She cordially approves the plan, formed in eternity; ſhe labors to carry it into execution. All things were created by God and for him, to promote the honor of his majeſty. Religion approves, admires, and adores the wiſdom of God, and her devout prayer is, "glorify thyſelf, roll on thine unchangeable purpoſes, and do all thy pleaſure." She joins in the ſongs of angels; ſhe unites in the labors of God.

This change of heart is a reaſonable duty, becauſe it ſaves the ſoul from ruin; it gives peace and ſalvation. The wicked and all, who forget God, ſhall be turned into hell. The impenitent and unbelieving muſt have their portion in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimſtone. In the day of judgment they muſt depart accurſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Faith, which is the operation of God, delivers the ſoul from this deſtruction, the thought of which is ſo diſtreſſing and overwhelming. This faith works by love, and purifies the heart; it is connected with the wiſdom, which cometh down from above. The ways of wiſdom are pleaſant. The godly have great peace of mind. The ſorrow of the world worketh death, but bleſſed are they who mourn with pious ſorrow. Bleſſed are the pure in heart; they ſhall ſee God. He that believeth ſhall be ſaved.

4. The change of heart, contemplated, is reaſonable, becauſe God has furniſhed us with all the natural powers, needful for ſuch a change.

God has given us a mind to know, a conſcience to feel what is right and wrong, a judgment to weigh conſequences, a heart to will according to our pleaſure. We have all the powers and faculties, neceſſary to produce this new character and life. God gives us a power of chooſing and refuſing. He commands us to make us a new heart. We may chooſe the good and refuſe the evil. It is, therefore, reaſonable in God to ſay, "chooſe ye this day whom ye will ſerve; if the Lord be God, follow him." It is reaſonable for him to command all men every where to repent.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We ſee how great a bleſſing is a new heart. A new heart, or that internal baptiſm, which is the operation of God, "is more precious than rubies." Such favored perſons, like Chriſt, have been crucified; they are dead and "buried" to ſin. They are riſen with Chriſt to a new life. They are children of God, and heirs of his promiſes; they are joint heirs with Jeſus Chriſt. Their names are in the book of life. They are called, juſtified, ſanctified, and will be ſaved. They poſſeſs that pearl, which is of great price; they have choſen the good part, which ſhall never be taken from them.

Had they been admitted to ſail on the tide of pleaſure, that tide would have fallen, or they would have been wrecked on ſome frightful coaſt, tortured with the pangs of ſelf reproach, remorſe, and deſpair.

Had they rioted in wealth, this might have taken wing in a moment, or their hearts might have ſickened at their own luxuries, and their ſplendors,

ceaſed to charm. Had reputation and honor been their portion, this, like a cloud of the morning, might have ſuddenly vaniſhed from ſight; but a new heart is an inheritance more permanent than the everlaſting hills, a portion, more ſatisfying, than all the kingdoms of this world.

2. We may ſee the importance of literature to ſound theology.

Not to mention more important reaſons, the figurative expreſſions of ſcripture render philological ſtudies neceſſary to every divine. Authors of all countries and ages uſe figures, but none are more bold than thoſe of the ſacred ſcriptures. The writers of theſe holy pages diſplay a boldneſs of conception, a loftineſs of fancy, unrivalled by the bards and orators of other countries. Homer, a ſun among earthly luminaries, "his eye with the fine phrenzy rolling," ſuppoſes the vengeance of Jupiter will make a mountain tremble; but in the cool, diſpaſſionate narratives of the prophets, "by the preſence of the Lord," or by the diſtant "voice of the Lord," "the everlaſting mountains are ſcattered, the perpetual hills bow." "Lebanon and Sirion ſkip like unicorns." "The iſlands and mountains are not found."

Illiterate men are peculiarly liable to make abſurd explanations of figures; the more frequent and the more bold the figures, the more danger from illiterate teachers.

Figurative expreſſions often agree with the object to be illuſtrated only in one point. Chriſt is repreſented as a "lion," as coming like a "thief." Is he, therefore, cruel, or does he take what is not his own? Such bold figures may be perverted in a ſhocking and impious manner. It is, therefore,

of infinite importance to the Church of Chriſt, to the chriſtian religion, to the cauſe of God, to the ſouls of men, that thoſe, who publicly explain ſcripture, ſhould be men of literature, men acquainted with language and the principles of good writing. It is hazardous; it is preſumptuous for the man, imperfectly acquainted with his mother tongue, to explain volumes, written in other languages, in other countries, in other ages, and in a different ſtate of ſociety, often referring to cuſtoms and manners, unknown to thoſe illiterate teachers. Thoſe circumſtances, unavoidably, give a peculiar complexion to theſe writings, and call for correſponding information in thoſe, who explain them. What then are the proſpects of that denomination whoſe religious teachers, with few exceptions, are illiterate men, unacquainted with the ſtructure of languages, and the rules of good writing.*

* Not the leaſt poſſible unkindneſs is entertained againſt our worthy Baptiſt brethren. When they preach evangelical truth we are pleaſed: but when they criticiſe languages; when they torture ſcripture figures; when they violently extort meanings, unknown to the ancient church, the truth muſt be told.

If any are jealous our repreſentation is not juſt, we refer them to Moſheim, vol. 4. He ſays "The anabaptiſts, however divided on other ſubjects, were agreed in their notions of learning and philoſophy, which in former times they unanimouſly conſidered, as the peſts of the chriſtian church, and as highly detrimental to the progreſs of true religion and virtue." In another place he ſays, "The general Baptiſts, or as they are called by ſome, the antipædobaptiſts, are for the moſt part perſons of mean conditions, and almoſt totally deſtitute of learning and knowledge. They profeſs a contempt for erudition and ſcience." We are happy in ſuppoſing the people here deſcribed are conſiderably improved, that their prejudices againſt a learned miniſtry are giving way to juſter views. The gradual improvement of our country, the eſtabliſhment of a college under their direction, the laudable emulation of ſome of their miniſters to acquire uſeful ſcience, we hope are harbingers of a brighter day, when the walls, which ſeparate chriſtian brethren, will be broken down. Probably the denomination have received ſome advantage in the courſe of a century or two from a few ſolitary congrega-

Would a prudent man so far trifle with his life as to entrust it with physicians of such character? Will he be more indifferent respecting his spiritual health, and apply to such teachers to explain to him the word of eternal life?

In the fourth century Audeus taught, that God had the shape of a *man*. His proof was, "Let us make man in our image." St. John says, "He [Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with *fire*." The Selucians and Hermians understood this literally, and maintained that material fire was necessary in the administration of baptism. Valentinus, like our Baptists, rebaptized those, who had received baptism out of his sect, and *drew them through the fire*. Heraclian, cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, says that some applied a red hot iron to the ears of the baptized. St. Paul says we are buried with Christ in baptism. This also has been understood literally; but such persons forget that to be consistent, on their plan, they should continue "buried" three days and three nights, the time Christ lay in the earth. Should any object that this would drown them, the baptist, in his way of treating figures, would have an easy answer, and readily prove that drowning was the very design of baptism. Rom. vi. 4. "We are buried with him by baptism into his death." We are not merely buried, for this is only a part, any more than sprinkling, but we are buried to death, "buried into his death." Thus he has scripture for drowning all

tional preachers joining them, who had received diplomas from some college. This must, however, be one of their minor advantages, for when was it known that the distinguished members of a party deserted? Men conscious of inferiority to their brethren, in literature and talents, have a powerful *temptation* to apostatize, and join a party, where their relative greatness will be advanced.

whom he baptizes, and preciſely as much ſcripture for drowning, as for burying. The very ſame paſſage, might he ſay, which commands burying, commands drowning, commands "death."

In the preſent mode of plunging, the reſemblance is almoſt entirely loſt. What is the reſemblance between laying a dead body in a rock, covering it with a great ſtone, ſealing it in a ſolemn manner; all things continuing in this ſtate, three days and three nights; what is the reſemblance between this, and ſuddenly plunging a living body into water, and inſtantly lifting it out of the water. What poſſible likeneſs is there between a *living perſon* in the *water*, and a *dead body* in a *rock*. The ſimilitude is little better than that of the blind man, who ſuppoſed the light of the ſun was like the noiſe of a cannon. We have accordingly endeavored to ſhow in the introduction, that the elegant ſcholar, the chriſtian orator of Tarſus, had no thought of any ſuch reſemblance; his object was to ſhow that in regeneration or ſpiritual baptiſm, which is followed "with newneſs of life" or a new life, "through faith which is the operation of God," we are dead and buried to ſin, and raiſed or made alive to God, as Chriſt was. The evident deſign of the text is to illuſtrate the preceding verſe, which ſpeaks of ſpiritual circumciſion made without hands. This *baptiſm* is that by which we are *raiſed with Chriſt*; but in water baptiſm we are not always raiſed with Chriſt. If men are plunged they may generally be raiſed from the water; but this has no neceſſary connexion with "riſing with Chriſt." This baptiſm is alſo effected "through faith which is the operation of God;" but a man may be raiſed out of an ocean of water, every day of his life, and re-

main deſtitute of faith; therefore, the text has no reference to water baptiſm. In theſe remarks may be ſeen the importance of literature to ſound divinity. Ignorance is the parent of error.

3. The excellence of the chriſtian character ſhows the divine original of the chriſtian ſyſtem.

The goſpel when it has due influence on the mind produces a new life, a new creature. His heart breathes a new temper, and his life is adorned with new actions. Can any fiction of men produce ſuch an effect? Has any ſyſtem of human philoſophy or religion been found adequate to ſuch a purpoſe? Will the ſacrifices of Pagans, will the ſplendid fancies of Mahometans produce ſuch a glorious change in the human mind? Let all the ſyſtems of human philoſophy and religion combine and exert their united energy on one man, they never can effect ſuch a change of character; they never can form a humble diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt. They may preſent us a Tully, a Socrates, or a Cato; but they never can form a Nathaniel without guile, a Joſeph without reſentment, nor a Daniel without ambition. All the fires of philoſophy and falſe religion do not furniſh a ſpark of that inextinguiſhable zeal, which inceſſantly glowed in the boſom of St. Paul.

4. Do not the excellent effects of internal baptiſm, and that "faith which is the operation of God," reprove many chriſtian profeſſors?

Ye are, my friends, crucified, and dead, and buried with Chriſt. Like him ſhould you be ſeparate from ſin, holy, harmleſs, and undefiled. Like him ſhould you walk with God. Yet how often do many pollute their hearts with worldly affections, their lips with worldly converſation, and their hands with

worldly conduct. How often do they descend from the elevated dignity of the christian character to be weak in virtue as other men. Instead of being crucified with Christ, they seem like Judas to be alive to worldly gain. Instead of being dead to the world, they seem almost ready to barter future glory for human applause. Descending from their high communion with God, they seek felicity in the beggarly elements of this world. By such professors Christ is wounded in the house of his friends. He knocks, he cries for entrance at the door of their hearts, his head wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. Such professors not only forsake their first love, wound their own peace, distress their own consciences, and cloud their own hopes of eternal life; but by their backsliding, the gospel is reproached, sinners are prejudiced and hardened in their sins, the people of God are afflicted and discouraged, and the holy spirit is grieved from our churches.

5. From the character of God's people we see how natural it is for them to commune together.

Characters, who are alike, always harmonize. Persons united in Jesus Christ, as necessarily have fellowship, as similar sounds are always in unison. It is the comfort and joy of christians to commune in the truths of God's word, in the duties of life, and in the institutions of religion.

It is, therefore, an object of desire, and a pursuit of life with the people of God, actually to hold communion in devout conversation, in religious services, and in all the things of God. This is one reason why they are glad to hear their friends say, "let us go up to the house of the Lord, and enquire in his holy temple."

God alſo commands his people to commune together, eſpecially in the ordinance of "the ſupper." "This do in remembrance of me." Of what unhallowed violence then are thoſe guilty, who ſeparate the children of God, who ſay to one part of their chriſtian brethren, "ſtand by, while we ſit down at our father's table. This is our father's table, and we charitably believe you to be the children of our father; yet we diſcard you from our communion, from our ſociety, not for want of evidence, that you are real ſaints; but becauſe more water was applied to us in baptiſm than to you."

So do men make themſelves believe, that a baſon, a ciſtern, or a river, are eſſential circumſtances in the chriſtian character, eſſential to chriſtian privileges. May not the Roman Catholic with as much reaſon make the ſign of the croſs, neceſſary to church communion? So often has it been proved and proved, that "baptize," that "many waters," "that going to the water," "that coming from the water" do not neceſſarily prove plunging, that a mind muſt be, peculiarly, organized to ſuppoſe, more proof is needed. To inſiſt, therefore, on this *mode* of baptiſm, as neceſſary to chriſtian communion, is to ſhow a temper, which cannot be miſtaken, yet need not be named.

That a mode, a ceremony, a certain quantity of water, or a certain extent of water on the body, ſhould be conſidered eſſential to chriſtian communion in the glimmering light of the ſixteenth century, is not very ſtrange; but that ſuch ideas ſhould continue to the preſent time, is a melancholy phenomenon in the religious world.

To ſeparate thoſe children from the table of their heavenly father, who are, confeſſedly, animated with the ſame faith, comforted with the ſame hope, and adorned with the ſame holy character, may ſeem more like the auſterity of a mercileſs eye ſervant, than the brotherly kindneſs of a faithful ſteward.

The compaſſionate Redeemer teaches, that his children are branches of the ſame vine; is it not unmerciful to tear off a part of the branches, leaving the vine, to be buffeted by the ſtorms, and the branches to wither, and languiſh, and die? The compaſſionate Redeemer teaches, that his children are the members of his body; is it not cruelty and murder by "cloſe communion" to tear off the limbs from the body? Is it not rending Jeſus Chriſt himſelf limb from limb? Will not the bleeding, mangled, dying members of Chriſt, be ſwift witneſſes againſt ſuch treatment? Is it not a violent "offence" to the "little ones" of Chriſt; is it not diſtreſs and death to that ſacred union, which exiſts among the members of Chriſt's body?

May we all, my brethren, ſtudy the things, which make for peace; may the watchmen of Zion lift up their voice in uniſon, and ſee eye to eye; may He, who walks in the midſt of the golden candleſticks, bid the wilderneſs and ſolitary place be glad, the deſert rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe, the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid, and the whole earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea. AMEN.

THE HONOURABLE AND PIOUS

CONFESSION,

OF A TRUE PENITENT; EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CASE OF MRS. ELIZABETH JACKSON. BEFORE THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, IN WILLIAMSTOWN, VERMONT; AND THE BAPTIST CHURCH, IN SAID TOWN—JUNE 3, 1805.

STATEMENT,

FROM REV. MR. THOMPSON.

BY requeſt of ſome of my pious friends, who are cordially engaged for the promotion of religious truth, I ſtate the following facts reſpecting Mrs. JACKSON; and atteſt the truth of her Letter, including her confeſſion, which ſhe ſent to the Elder and Baptiſt Church, where ſhe received her baptiſm by immerſion.

Mrs. JACKSON, with her huſband, are perſons of decent abilities, and approved piety; they were both received into the Congregational Church, in Peterſham, in Maſſachuſetts; they, a few years ago, removed to Williamſtown, in the ſtate of Vermont, where they have ſince lived; and have ſupported a good and regular chriſtian character. They have conſtantly attended divine worſhip, with their congregational brethren, when favoured with preaching; but at other times, eſpecially upon week days, have attended the miniſtration of the

Baptists.—In the latter part of the past winter, and in the spring following, the people's attention was much excited in religious concerns, and preaching and conferences, were frequent—especially among the baptists. Mrs. JACKSON's mind became unusually affected and solemn. At their meeting for examinations and for baptisms, she gave evidence of great anxiety of mind, by sighs and tears. Upon being asked the cause of her great distress, she replied, "I am troubled about baptism."—It is to be noted, that she had been, more than a year before this, by the conversation of a baptist, much confused in her mind, and almost persuaded to give up her infant baptism. The question was then put unto her, whether she did not feel it her privilege to go into the water, and be baptized? Her reply was, that she did not, then. But by the expressions of zeal and affection, or through the multiplicity of words, with which she was surrounded, she not only consented to the ordinance, but received it then, and was received in fellowship with the baptist brethren.

AFTER being sensible she had taken a wrong step, she requested a conference with them; that the path of her duty might be made clear, and fearing lest she should make bad worse, and thereby increase the injury she had done the cause of Christ. But, in conversation with them, she became more established, that duty called her to appear in the congregation of God's people, and exhibit her feelings and views of the nature of her past conduct. She freely presented to me the confession, and desired me to read it in public; which was done upon the first sabbath of June, 1805.

If I can judge, in ſuch caſes, ſhe gave good evidence of godly ſincerity and brokenneſs of heart, whenever I had opportunity of converſation with her upon the ſubject. She is a perſon of an amiable mind, as to her natural temper; and has a good underſtanding in the great truths of the goſpel; and is far from any enthuſiaſm or conſtitutional unſteadineſs of mind—but appears, in general, to deliberate well on whatever ſhe does.

LATHROP THOMPSON.

Williamſtown, June 3, 1805.

REVERENDS AND BELOVED,

I, ELIZABETH JACKSON, take this early opportunity to let you, my brethren and ſiſters of the baptiſt denomination, uſually meeting on the Eaſt hill, (ſo called) know what I have done, and my reaſons for thus doing.

AFTER I had received baptiſm, in *your way*, and on ſeeing my infant child, and calling to mind my covenant vows, in giving up myſelf to God, and to his Congregational Church in Peterſham, and in giving up my children in baptiſm; by each and every of theſe tranſactions, I put my own hand (in faith, I truſt) to the holy ſeal of Baptiſm, which my parents firſt put upon me, in my infancy; and made that baptiſm my own, by the act of faith which I hope, God, by his gracious Spirit, gave me, a poor, undone ſinner, before I viſibly covenanted with my God, and his holy people.

I SAY, reflecting upon what I had done when among you, my dear chriſtian friends, I had no reſt

nor comfort, night nor day 'till I was brought to confeſs my ſinful folly; and loathe myſelf for my ſhameful departure from my God, and for the violation of his holy covenant, which I had trifled with and trampled upon.

When I had ſorrowed and wept, with brokenneſs of heart, in ſecret; and had confeſſed my wicked departure from my God, by breaking his holy covenant before his people, among whom I love to worſhip, I found a ſweet peace return to my ſoul, which had been a ſtranger to my breaſt, for weeks.

The Confeſſion I made public yeſterday, I will now tranſcribe to you; and wiſh it may be read publicly among you. I aſk your forgiveneſs. Oh! beloved, pray for me! who am leſs than the leaſt of all God's mercies.

My Confeſſion now follows:—

"In my infancy I was dedicated to God, in baptiſm, by my parents: and when I had arrived to adult years, (as I humbly hope) I was brought to embrace that righteouſneſs of faith in Chriſt Jeſus, of which water baptiſm is an outward ſeal; and profeſſing, publicly, this my faith, and entering into covenant with God's people, I think I underſtandingly took my infant baptiſm, and made it my own act; and thus acknowledged the ſame faith which my parents did, and of which the baptiſm I had already received, and in my perſonal dedication renewed, was an outward ſeal.

"But, afterwards, having ſome ſuggeſtions offered, as though what my parents had done could not anſwer my duty for myſelf; I was, for a time, conſiderably tried upon the ſubject.

"But, without due consideration in examining for the light of the scriptures upon this important point; in a hasty and inconsiderate manner, I consented to receive that ordinance again, by immersion: in the doing of which, I humbly conceive, I have not only renounced all that my parents had done for me, in baptism; and what I had done, by receiving it as my baptism; and what I had done for my children: But, also, I have trifled with this divine institution, and have broken covenant with God, and have justly offended the great Head of the church. For which, I desire to take shame to myself; and to humble myself before God and men; and ask pardon and forgiveness.

"To God, I earnestly pray, that he would graciously pardon this my grievous offence against him, and his holy institutions; and again lift on me, a vile sinner, the light of his countenance. I ask the forgiveness of all my christian friends, whom I have offended by this my hasty, wicked, and unjustifiable conduct.

"By the grace of God assisting me, I engage, for the future, to be more *considerate* and *circumspect* in my walk; and to honour my holy profession, by a humble walk with God, and steadfastness in the faith and order of the gospel.

"I sincerely ask the prayers of all God's people, that I may be preserved from all errours, in future; and carefully adorn the doctrines and institutions of God our Saviour, in all things; and, at last, be found to divine acceptance.——AMEN."

My christian brethren and sisters: I have no fault to charge upon you;—to myself be all the folly, shame, and guilt. I have done what I could, in public retraction, from a sincere desire that the

injury I have given Christ, in the world, may, in some measure, be wiped away; and you and all other churches and christians, be built up an holy people, in the Lord; and Satan rage in vain, and vent his malice to no purpose, except his confusion and utter destruction.

I WISH for the honour to subscribe myself, your sister, (though most unworthy) in the common faith of Jesus Christ, our bleeding Saviour.

ELIZABETH JACKSON.

FOR the satisfaction of all, into whose hands this confession may fall, I hereby certify, from personal acquaintance, that the Rev. LATHROP THOMSON, is a gentleman of unblemished moral character, sincere piety, and of respectable standing in the christian ministry. His statement, communicated to me, prefixed to the confession, may, therefore, be relied on, as a faithful narrative of facts; and not to be evaded, by the evil surmisings, and uncharitable reflections, of prejudiced or incredulous readers.

WALTER KING,
Pastor of a Church, in Norwich, Connecticut.

FINIS.